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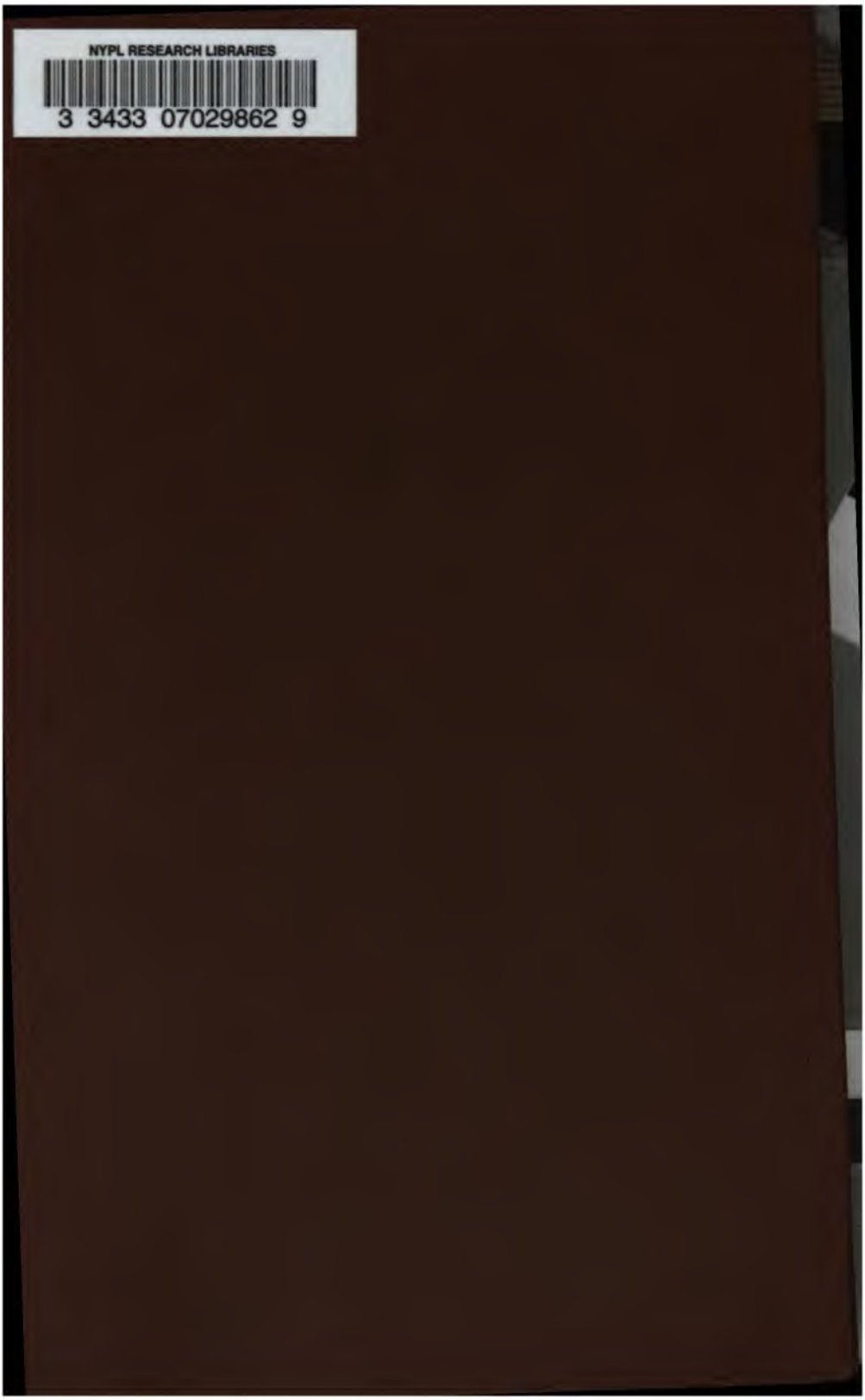
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THE

CHURCHMAN ARMED

AGAINST THE

ERRORS OF THE TIME.

BY "THE SOCIETY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF TRACTS IN DEFENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND, AS BY LAW ESTABLISHED."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

General Preface..... v

PART I.

ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, ON THE MINISTERIAL COMMISSION, AND ON THE UNITY TO BE PRESERVED IN THE CHURCH.

Page

Preface..... 1
Eight Discourses by the Rev. Edward Davies..... 11
Extracts from Archbishop Wake's Apostolical Fathers.... 145
Ember Days in Lent—explained by Robert Nelson, Esq. 161

PART. II.

ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND TESTS.

Preface..... 177
An Essay on Establishments in Religion. By Rev. Mr. Rotheram..... 183
Of a Test Law. By Bishop Warburton..... 277
The present Delusion of many Protestants considered. By Bishop Hoadly..... 341
Bishop Sherlock's Arguments against a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts..... 363
Bishop Horsley's Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters with Reference to the Corporation and Test Acts..... 421
The Claims of some English Protestants to greater Liberty than they now enjoy. By Bishop Ellys..... 479
Extracts from Reflections on the French Revolution. By the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke..... 501

VOL. II.

PART III.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Preface..... 1
The Sentiments of a Church of England Man with respect to Religion and Government. By Dean Swift..... 7
A True Churchman set in a just and clear Light; or an Essay towards the right Character of a faithful Son of the Established Church. By Dr. Edward Synge, Archbishop of Tuam in Ireland..... 45

Page

The Nature of Supremacy, in Matters Ecclesiastical, vested in the Crown. By Dr. Anthony Ellys, Bishop of St. David's..... 83

PART IV.

POPERY.

Preface..... 123

Popery destructive of the Evidence of Christianity. By Nathaniel Forster, B. D. Fellow of Corpus Christi College..... 131

The Corruptions of the Church of Rome, in relation to Ecclesiastical Government, the Rule of Faith, and Form of Divine Worship; in Answer to the Bishop of Meaux's Queries; with an Appendix. By Dr. Bull, Bishop of St. David's..... 151

Certain Accusations brought recently by Irish Papists against British and Irish Protestants of every Denomination, examined by Dr Thomas Kipling, Dean of Peterborough .. 239

Christ, and not St Peter, the Rock of the Christian Church; and St. Paul, the Founder of the Church in Britain. A Letter to the Clergy of the Diocess of St David's. By Thomas Burgess, D. D. F. R S. and F A. S Bishop of St. David's..... 309

A Second Letter from the Bishop of St David's to the Clergy of his Diocess, on the Independence of the Ancient British Church on any Foreign Jurisdiction: with a Postscript on the Testimony of Clemens Romanus..... 368

The Case stated, between the Church of Rome and the Church of England A Conversation betwixt an English Roman Catholic Nobleman, and a Gentleman, his Friend, of the Church of England: wherein is showed, that the Doubt and the Danger is in the former, and the Certainty and Safety in the latter Communion. By Charles Leslie, A. M..... 421

VOL. III.

PART V.

TOLERATION.

Preface..... 1

True Moderation: a Sermon on Phil. iv. 5. By Thomas Brett, LL.D. Rector of Betteshanger, in Kent..... 9

An Essay concerning Civil Government, considered as it stands related to Religion, wherein the Magistrate's Right to support and encourage true Religion, by human Laws, is asserted, against the Modern Pleaders, for an absolute, unrestrained Toleration. By Henry Stebbing, M. A.. 33

GENERAL PREFACE.

In the Spring of 1813, a society was formed for the distribution of tracts and other smaller publications in defence of the constitution in church and state, as by law established.* Carefully to guard against any appearance of intrusion on the province of The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, its objects were declared to be perfectly distinct; the office of the one being to distribute Bibles, Testaments, Prayer Books, and religious tracts among the inferior orders of the community; of the other, to reprint and circulate such tracts and pamphlets as might influence the minds of the higher orders on the most important constitutional questions. To prevent any interference or competition with the venerable institution in question, it was resolved, at the first establishment of this new society, to republish no tracts which were upon the list for distribution at Bartlet's Buildings, but to confine its exertions entirely within the limits of its own sphere.

Since its establishment, many scarce and valuable tracts have been re-edited under its direction. It appeared, however, to the committee, by whom its exertions are regulated, that, however useful such single publications might have been, a much more valuable and extended advantage might be derived to the public at large by embodying these and other pamphlets in a volume, so as to give them that permanent possession both of the attention and of the

* See the Resolutions of the Society at the end of this Preface.

libraries of their readers, which the loose pages of a single tract cannot be expected to command. That the objects of the society, in thus preserving the interest of their readers, might be still more fully accomplished, it was thought expedient, not only to embody, but to arrange, these publications in such a manner, as to form a regular and connected series of discussion on the very important subjects which they were intended to embrace.

The first object of this society was to impress upon the public mind, and particularly upon that of the rising generation, the strong and paramount claims of PUBLIC PRINCIPLE. By PRINCIPLE is not meant the airy speculations of vague and delusive theory; but that code of moral law, which is the joint result of reason and experience. These are the great guides of our judgment on things around us, the source of all that renders life a blessing either in an individual or a national view, and the origin of that PRINCIPLE upon which all public and private institutions are established, and are to be maintained. Without experience, all the efforts of the human mind, are to every practical purpose, little better than the phantoms of a visionary imagination, which have no foundation on which their utility can be grounded, or their permanency secured. Without reasoning upon the nature of things, experience sinks into a low and sordid calculation of temporal advantage, and man becomes a mere machine of selfish and degraded interest. PRINCIPLE is that compounded motive of action which reason informs us is consonant with the laws of abstract right, and experience teaches us is conducive to the welfare and happiness of man.

Upon PRINCIPLE then, thus created and established, we

found our attachment to all that is high and honourable in the more contracted paths of private life, to all that is venerable and noble in the more expanded prospect of public duty. Upon PRINCIPLE, the fabric of our constitution both in Church and State is reared and supported, and by PRINCIPLE alone can it be strengthened and maintained. This is the high ground upon which every pure and patriotic mind must take its stand, and upon this we must rest our defence of all that is dear to us as Englishmen and as Christians.

To inculcate and to vindicate this PRINCIPLE on a most vital and essential point in our political no less than our religious existence, is the design of the present publication. To the defence of our English church these volumes are peculiarly dedicated and directed. Experience would teach every thoughtful and inquiring mind, with how powerful a bond of united interest the ecclesiastical and civil institutions of our native land are cemented and confirmed. Upon this ground alone, every ardent lover of the civil constitution of his country would give some portion of his attachment and favour also to the ecclesiastical. But political EXPEDIENCY is not PRINCIPLE; it forms a part only of that sound and inestimable rule of moral action. Not only because experience teaches us that the church is an integral and essential part of our constitution, but because reason declares that it is a pure, primitive, and apostolic institution, it is that we assert its claims to our protection and love; and thus upon PRINCIPLE, we become the zealous defenders of our established church.

Under these impressions, and with these views, it was thought necessary to trace its claims to the highest source, and to show that the first builders of this ancient and be-

loved fabric were "*the apostles and martyrs, Christ himself being the corner stone.*" The first head, therefore, to which, in the arrangement of the argument, the attention must be directed is, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. The discourses and extracts upon this subject will show generally the nature and constitution of that universal church, which, under different forms, is established throughout the world.

Under the second head ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND TESTS, will be proved the necessity of some one separate form to be established in each separate state; and it will be demonstrated that it is essential alike to the welfare of that state and to the interests of true religion, that this established form should be the only one rewarded and encouraged by the state, or combined with its political constitution; that all therefore entrusted with civil power should openly profess this same religion, and should render some test of the sincerity of their professions. This part of the argument will involve the very interesting and important question of the alliance between Church and State.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND will form the third part of the work. It will here be shown to claim our regard, not merely as a part of our political fabric, and as an established church; but as a form of Christianity, the most pure in its constitution, the most scriptural in its articles, the most primitive in its discipline. In charity, mildness, and simplicity, it will be shown to be worthy of its Blessed Master, to be his most sacred and accredited representative here upon earth, and to approach as near to Christian purity and perfection, as any institution, partly human, can hope to attain.

The fourth subject, to which the attention of our readers will be directed, is POPERY. The immediate connection between this and the preceding head is too clearly discoverable to need any explanation. The encroachments which the restless and aspiring genius of this religion has recently been making upon the Constitution, render it a duty peculiarly incumbent upon a Society established in its defence, to proclaim the dangers to which it stands exposed, from its ancient and inveterate foe. To mark the progress and to designate the features of this most hostile of all our assailants, will be the design of this part of our collection; and from thence to deduce the conclusion, that, if Popery be once admitted within the walls of our Constitution, the citadel of Protestant principle will be laid in ruins; and with it, all those blessings both in Church and State, which a free government and a free religion have for so many years dispensed to the inhabitants of this happy land.

The fifth subject for discussion is TOLERATION, or the treatment of those who dissent from a church thus established. Upon this very important question such a selection has been made, as may fix our opinions upon a sure and solid basis. Upon no point, in this age of wild and visionary theories, is that principle, which we would inculcate, so powerfully called for, or so essentially demanded. We are not, in the delusive spirit of modern liberality, to sacrifice all that is dear to us as Christians and as men, to the encroachments of our adversaries, with a vague indifference and a sceptical unconcern. The principle which we would not only impress upon the minds, but embody in the actions of every true member of our holy church, is, while we afford toleration and even protection to our enemies, to reserve authority and

honour exclusively to our friends. Dissent is to be suffered, not rewarded; toleration is not to be rendered a *felo de se;* nor are we, in our zeal to extend its influence, to destroy that body in which it exclusively exists.

Having thus explained the design of the present volumes, it remains only to state the method in which it has been carried into execution. Upon each of these heads such treatises have been selected, as have been deemed most clearly to explain, and most powerfully to establish, the point in question. How far ability will appear in the disposition, or judgment in the selection of these materials, is for the reader to determine. Such names as Warburton, Swift, Burke, Balguy, &c. are of themselves these volumes' best defence. It has been the endeavour of those to whom the arrangement was entrusted, to admit no second-rate production into their publication. All that will be found in these volumes are the works of the "master-builders" in politics and in theology; and it is earnestly hoped, that, under each of these heads, the reader will find all that can be advanced to form his principle or to strengthen his persuasion in a short and narrow compass. Many of the treatises here published, are both scarce and valuable; many are selected from voluminous collections, never having been previously published in a single form. It is hoped that all these circumstances will recommend these volumes to that general notice which the importance of the subject will demand, and to that universal reception into the libraries of the student which the value of the materials will justify and require.

It may not, perhaps, be superfluous to add, that most of the treatises here published, are given whole and per-

fect; in one or two instances where an extract only has been presented, that extract also is given entire without any alterations or omissions, any sort of garbled matter having been thought totally inconsistent with the credit and respect due either to the authors of the several parts of the work, or to the Society under whose auspices they have been edited: particularly as, in most instances, the opinions here inculcated, come forward recommended and consecrated by the great names of those, who, of themselves, command both admiration and conviction.

Should this publication be so far honoured by the public approbation, as to arrest their attention and to claim a place in their esteem, the views of the Society will have been fully answered; as they are confident that the works of those great men, whose reputation and fame do honour to these volumes, cannot be read without imparting a new life and energy to those principles both in Church and State, which it was the labour of their life to maintain, and the pride of their heart to have established and confirmed.

SOCIETY

FOR THE

DISTRIBUTION OF TRACTS

IN

DEFENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND,

AS BY LAW ESTABLISHED.

At a Meeting holden at Mr. J. J. STOCKDALE'S, *No.* 41, *Pall-Mall, on Thursday, May* 6, 1813.

It was Resolved,

1. That holding as we do, our Establishment in Church and State in the highest veneration, and impressed with the deepest gratitude for the blessings we enjoy under it, and deprecating all change in the essential principles of the Constitution; We, being desirous of promoting its permanent stability, by means specified in the following Resolutions, do resolve to form ourselves into a Society for that purpose, under the denomination of the "SOCIETY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF TRACTS IN DEFENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND AS BY LAW ESTABLISHED."

2. That the general objects of this Society are to promote the Security and support the general Rights of the Church;—and, for these purposes, to form, in the Metropolis, a centre of Union with all friends to the Established Church, on principles of Charity with all denominations of Christians, but of inflexible adherence to the Established Church.

3. That, considering the exertions which are now making by the Roman Catholics, for obtaining a repeal of such Laws as were deemed by our ancestors necessary for maintaining the Protestant Establishment in Church and State, we consider the danger, which threatens the Church from this source, an object of primary attention.

4. That this Society, not being formed on the supposition that other Societies, friendly to the Established Church, are inadequate to their several purposes, but to pursue objects which do not come within the view of such Societies, will, in no respect, interfere, either with "The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge," or with "The National Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church."

5. That this Society will distribute Tracts, tending to show the necessity and usefulness of Ecclesiastical Establishments in general; the superior excellence of that under which we live as a National Establishment; the aid which it derives from and affords to the

state; the true nature of toleration; and the protection which religious liberty derives from the tolerant character of the National Church.

6. That the following Form of Recommendation be observed for the Admission of Members into this Society. "We, the underwritten, do recommend A. B. to be a Member of the Society for the Distribution of Tracts in Defence of the United Church of England and Ireland, as by Law established, and do verily believe that he is well affected to His Majesty King George and his government, and to the Church of England as by law established."

7. That persons, members of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, are eligible to be ballotted for as members of this Society, without further recommendation, and that a subscription of one guinea, or upwards, annually, or a donation of ten guineas, or upwards, shall entitle any person, so elected, to be a member of this Society.

8 That this Society meet at 12 o'Clock on the first Thursday in every Month, for the election of Members; that such election be by ballot; and that no ballot take place for any new Member, unless notice shall have been given at one meeting before that at which the ballot shall be proposed, and that a Minority of one fifth shall exclude.

9. That the whole business of the Society be conducted by a permanent Committee.

10. That the Committee do, at present, consist of nine Members, with a power to increase their number, as they may see occasion, to fifteen, of which Committee five shall be a quorum, and that the Committee be likewise empowered to fill up vacancies as they shall occur.

11. That the following nine Members being this day elected, by ballot, be the Committee.

The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of St. David's.
The Right Honourable Lord Kenyon.
The Right Honourable Lord Radstock.
The Reverend Archdeacon Middleton.
John Round, Esq. M. P.
George Wharton Marriott, Esq.
The Reverend Laurence Gardner, A. M.
The Reverend Thomas Wilkinson, A. M.
The Reverend Thomas Rennell, A. M.

12. That the Treasurer and Secretary for the time being, be extra Members of the Committee.

13. That there be one general meeting in the year, on the first Thursday in May, for receiving reports and auditing accounts.

14. That William Wix, Esq. F.R.S. be requested to take the office of Treasurer.

15. That the Rev. Samuel Wix, A.M. F.R.S. be the Secretary.

16. That the Committee Meetings of the Society be held at Mr. J. J. STOCKDALE's, 41, Pall-Mall.

20th May, 1813.

At a Meeting of the Committee it was resolved,

"That a Book be kept at Mr. STOCKDALE's, in which it shall be competent to any Member of the Society to propose the republication of any Tract which he may deem conducive to the furtherance of the Objects which the Society has in View; that the Committee, at their meetings, shall take into consideration any proposal so made; and that those Members to whom it may not be convenient, on account of distance or otherwise, to avail themselves of this method of signifying their wishes, be requested to offer such proposal by means of a letter, post paid, addressed to the Secretary."

1st. June, 1814.

PRESENT COMMITTEE.

The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of St. David's.
The Right Honourable Lord Kenyon.
The Right Honourable Lord Radstock.
The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Calcutta.
The Very Reverend the Dean of Winchester.
John Round, Esq. M.P.
George Wharton Marriott, Esq.
The Reverend Laurence Gardner, A.M.
The Reverend Thomas Wilkinson, A.M.
The Reverend Thomas Rennell, A.M.
James Haworth, M.D.
Lieutenant-Colonel Elliott, A.M. F.R.S.

WITH

The Treasury and Secretary for the time being.

*** Communications to this Society may be addressed to the Reverend SAMUEL WIX, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Secretary to the Society; or to Mr. J. J. STOCKDALE, No. 41, Pall-Mall.

"The Society for the Distribution of Tracts in "Defence of the United Church of England "and Ireland, as by Law established," *beg leave to recommend the following Works as containing Principles adapted to promote the important Objects which they have in View.*

A Discourse of the Visible and Invisible Church of Christ, in which it is shown that the Powers claimed by the Officers of the Visible Church are not inconsistent with the Supremacy of Christ as Head; or with the Rights and Liberties of Christians as Members of the Invisible Church. By John Rogers, D.D. Vicar of St. Giles, Cripplegate, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

A Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church. By W. Stevens, Esq. Rivingtons.

Primitive Truth and Order vindicated from Modern Misrepresentation. By the Rt. Rev. John Skinner, Senior Bishop of the Scotch Episcopal Church.

Episcopacy by Divine Institution. By Jeremiah Taylor. 4to. Oxford, 1642.

Episcopacy and Presbytery considered with Respect to Church Government. By H. Ferne, D D. 1647.

A Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy: to which is added, A Discourse concerning the Unity of the Church. By Isaac Barrow, D.D. late Master of Trinity College in Cambridge; late Archbishop of Canterbury.

An Answer to the Dissenters' Pleas for Separation, or an Abridgment of the London Cases. By Thomas Bennett, D.D. 1711 Fifth edition.

A Discourse of Church Government; wherein the Rights of the Church and the Supremacy of Christian Princes are vindicated and adjusted. By John Potter, D.D. Archbishop of Canterbury.

A Treatise on the Church, chiefly with respect to its Government: in which the Divine Right of Episcopacy is maintained; the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome proved to be contrary to the Scriptures and Primitive Fathers; and the Reformed Episcopal Church in England, Ireland, and Scotland, proved to be a sound and orthodox Part of the Catholic Church. Compiled from the most eminent Divines. By Edward Barwick, M.A. of Trinity College, Dublin. Second edition.

The Faith and Practice of a Church of England Man. By the Rev. Dr. Stanley, Dean of St. Asaph. 1688.

Scriptural Illustrations of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. By Samuel Wix, A.M. Rector of Inworth,

Essex, and Vicar of St. Bartholomew the Less, London. Rivingtons, St. Paul's Church Yard; and Hatchard, Piccadilly.

A Guide to the Church; in several Discourses. To which are added, Two Postscripts; the first, To those Members of the Church who occasionally frequent other Places of Public Worship; the second, To the Clergy, with *a new introductory Preface to the Reader.* By the Rev. Charles Daubeny, Archdeacon of Sarum. Second edition. Rivingtons.

An Appendix to the Guide to the Church; in several Letters; in which the Principles advanced in that Work are more fully maintained, in Answer to Objections. By the Rev. Charles Daubeny, Archdeacon of Sarum. Second edition. Rivingtons.

A Short Catechism on the Duty of conforming to the Established Church as good Subjects and good Christians. By the Rt. Rev. Thomas Burgess, D.D. Bishop of St. David's.

An Answer to the Question "Why are you a Churchman?" By Thomas Grimwood Taylor, A.M. Rivingtons.

The Unreasonableness of Separation; or an impartial Account of the History, Nature, and Pleas of the Separation from the Communion of the Church of England; with several Letters of eminent Protestant Divines from abroad. By Edward Stillingfleet, D.D. Bishop of Worcester.

The grand Imposture of the Romish Church in avouching that she is the Mother and Mistress of all other Churches, and that without her there is no Salvation. By Thomas Moreton, Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield. 1628.

Dr. Trapp's Popery truly stated and briefly refuted. 12mo. 1814. 3*s.* Stockdale, Pall-Mall.

A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln, at the Triennial Visitation of that Diocese in May, June, and July 1812, By George Tomline, D.D. F.R.S. Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

An Appeal to the Gospel, or an Inquiry into the Justice of the Charge alleged by the Methodists and other Objectors, that *the Gospel is not preached by the National Clergy:* in a Series of Discourses delivered before the University of Oxford in the Year 1812, at the Lecture founded by the late Rev. J. Bampton, M.A. Canon of Salisbury. By Richard Mant, M.A. Vicar of Coggeshall, Essex, and late Fellow of Oriel College. Fifth edition. Rivingtons, and Hatchard.

The Scholar armed against the Errors of the Time; or a Collection of Tracts on the Principles and Evidences of Christianity, the Constitution of the Church, and the Authority of Civil Government. In two volumes. Third edition. Rivingtons.

The Churchman's Remembrancer, a Collection of scarce and valuable Tracts in Defence of the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England. 8vo. vol. 1. Rivingtons.

THE

CHURCHMAN ARMED

AGAINST

THE ERRORS OF THE TIME.

PART I.

ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, ON THE MINISTERIAL COMMISSION, AND ON THE UNITY TO BE PRESERVED IN THE CHURCH.

THE insufficiency of man to discover, by his own natural powers, any certain knowledge, either of the attributes or of the worship of the Deity, is manifest from the various contradictory opinions which were entertained, concerning the nature of the Supreme Being, by the wisest philosophers of ancient days, while they were unblest by divine revelation. This simple consideration powerfully urges humility upon man, and directs him to the Holy Scriptures, as the records of the Divine Will, and the elements of every duty which an acquaintance with the attributes of the Almighty suggests. It must, however, occur to every reflecting mind, that, among those who profess

to believe the Scriptures, very different opinions have prevailed, both with respect to the doctrines which are to be derived from them, and the discipline by which those doctrines are to be maintained. Even christians, who are blest with the clearest revelation, which God was ever pleased to make to man, are much divided in opinion respecting the doctrines delivered in the Gospel, and the mode by which the purity of the christian faith is to be maintained in the church. There would be less difference of sentiment on these sacred matters, if, instead of subjecting the Scriptures to our own diversified opinions, we were to endeavour to place ourselves in the circumstances of those persons who were first guided by their authority; and, having ascertained their prevailing opinions and usages, to regulate ourselves according to the model which they have left us of the christian church.

To recall the minds of christians to this very important subject, which is too little contemplated in the present day, is one object of this compilation. It is zealously hoped that this object may be promoted, if we are successful in obtaining due attention to the following judicious discourses, and to the succeeding extracts from the writings of those apostolical fathers which have been considered genuine by the ablest critics. The discourses are by the Reverend Edward Davies, Rector of Bishopstone, in the Diocese of St. David's, and the learned author of "*Celtic Researches*," "*The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*," &c. The extracts are taken from the 2d edition of Wake's Apostolical Fathers.

The editors of this compilation have an earnest wish to impress correct notions of the christian church upon the minds of those who read this part of their work. For this purpose they would observe, that what was deemed, by the apostles of Christ and their companions, to be essential to the character of the church, claims the closest possible regard in these advanced ages of the Gospel. It may be that God has, in his infinite wisdom, purposely left some particulars, concerning the nature and constitution of the christian church, unpronounced, with commanding precision, in the New Testament, in order that, under the authority of apostolical and primitive example, the general spirit of the Gospel might be more conspicuous and free among those who strive to acquire it in its genuine characters of humility and a love of concord. While, then, we have before us the usages of the apostles, and of those who immediately succeeded them, let us distrust our own private notions of that discipline, by which the christian faith may be best maintained in genuine purity, if at any time we should find our notions at variance with their usages. With the Bible in our hands, let us be careful not to overlook the primitive practices of the apostles and earliest christians; but, from what *they* believed, and from what *they* practised, under the direction of their Divine Master, to "go and teach all nations," let the nature of the christian church be ascertained, rather than from the uncertain and very contradictory notions of the present day. On this subject, we are ourselves most forcibly impressed with the justice of the complaint made,

now nearly a century back, by the pious Nelson, author of " A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England." That excellent layman, in the preface to his admirable work, lamented that the clergy were, in his days, restrained from sufficiently insisting on the nature of the christian church, and on the authority of the ministerial commission, in consequence of a modest apprehension that they might be misconceived to entertain a wish unduly to magnify their office. The modesty, to which Mr. Nelson respectfully referred this deficiency of instruction, on the part of the regular ministry, has ever since operated, and the christians of this country remain uninstructed in the true nature of the church of Christ. When therefore it has been adverted to, and the authority of its ministers asserted, a charge of pride has commonly been adduced against the conscientious minister who has brought the neglected truth before his hearers, insomuch that, not only modesty, but the fear of such a charge, has restrained the clergy from more frequently teaching the nature of their divine commission. The ignorance which consequently prevails as to the nature and constitution of the christian church, and the many divisions by which it is agitated, call aloud for a remedy. It is not now a time for the reverend the clergy to be deterred, by an erroneous feeling of modesty, from the discharge of this part of their duty. The author of the following Discourses has ably discharged his duty in this particular. While his professed purpose is to urge, *that the great christian duty of maintaining communion*

with the apostolical church remains uncancelled by the tolerance of British laws, he demonstrates the authority of an episcopal appointment to the christian ministry, in succession from the apostles; he enforces the necessity of union among the disciples of Christ, and he distinctly marks and deplores the sin of schism or separation. May his example be followed, and may the blessing of the Almighty ever attend the duly authorized and consecrated ministers of Christ!

In the succeeding extracts from the apostolical fathers, we find every caution conveyed, in these Discourses, as to the obedience due to the bishop; and every exhortation to union, amply confirmed, with all the authority which attaches to the precepts of those acknowledged disciples of Christ, who lived with, or immediately survived, the apostles.

The first extract is taken from the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians; "an Epistle," says Archbishop Wake, "so highly esteemed by the primitive church, that we are told that it was wont to be publicly read in the assemblies of it: and, if we may credit one of the ancient collections of the canon of Scripture, was placed among the sacred and inspired writings. Nor is it any small evidence of the value which, in those days, was put upon this Epistle, that, in the only copy of it which, for aught we know, at this day remains of it, we find it to have been written in the same volume with the Books of the New Testament."

The same Archbishop also observes, that "for what concerns the person who wrote this Epistle,

it is no small commendation which the Holy Ghost, by St. Paul, has left us of him, Phil. iv. 3, where the Apostle mentions him, not only as his fellow-labourer in the work of the Gospel, but as one whose name is written in the book of life; a character which, if we allow our Saviour to be the judge, far exceeds that of the highest power and dignity; and who therefore, when his disciples began to rejoice upon the account of that authority which he had bestowed upon them, insomuch that even the devils were subject unto them, (Luke x. 17.) though he seemed to allow that there was a just matter of joy in such an extraordinary power, yet bade them not to rejoice so much in this, that those spirits were subject unto them, but rather, says he, rejoice that your names are written in the book of life."

This eminent Saint seems to have written his Epistle principally with a view to compose those divisions which had unhappily crept into the Church of Christ, and which had before been noticed by St. Paul. After the death of the Apostle they seem to have increased. Wherefore, St. Clement largely insists on the necessity of obedience to the regularly constituted Ministry, and on an orderly discharge of all christian duties. He shows the orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, established by the Apostles; he enforces peace, from examples out of the holy Scriptures; he observes on the value which God puts upon love and unity, and exhorts such as had been concerned in religious divisions to repent, and *to return to their unity, confessing their sins unto God.*

We shall next offer extracts from the Epistles of St. Ignatius, who was, " upon the death of *Evodius*, chosen by the *Apostles*, that were still living, to be Bishop of *Antioch*, the *metropolis* of *Syria*." (Archbishop Wake. Introduction, page 45.)

In his several epistles to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Trallians, the Philadelphians, the Smyrnæans, and to St. Polycarp, he amply states the policy of an episcopal discipline in the church, and forcibly urges the necessity of religious unity.

It will not escape the attentive reader of the extracts which we shall offer, that erroneous doctrine is considered the natural result of divisions. In his epistle to the Smyrnæans, having cautioned them against false doctrine, he specially exhorts them to " flee all divisions as the beginning of evil." (Page 117.)

Much more to the same purpose might be produced from these epistles; but our object is not so much to show the evils arising from divisions, and prevailing among those Christians who have renounced the episcopal authority, as to demonstrate what that authority is, and ever has been, in the christian church; and how strongly it was urged, and repeatedly enforced, by the primitive professors of Christ's religion, that *nothing should be done without the bishop*. We have cause to believe, that what these primitive professors taught concerning the doctrine, the government, and the discipline of the church, they received, as Archbishop Wake observes, " *from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and*

and that blessed Spirit who directed them both in what they taught and in what they ordained." (Page 5 of preface.)

It may be further observed, in the language with which Archbishop Wake concludes the preface to his most useful work.

"The doctrine, government, and discipline" of the primitive church, thus made known to us, "is so exactly agreable to the present doctrine, government, and discipline of the church of England, by law established, that no one who allows of the one, can reasonably make any exceptions against the other. So that we must either say, that the immediate successors of the apostles had departed from the institutions of those holy men, from whom they received their instruction, in the gospel of Christ, and by whom they were converted to the faith of it; or, if that be too unreasonable to be supposed of such excellent persons, who not only lived in some of the highest stations of the christian church, but the most of them suffered martyrdom for the sake of it, we must then conclude, what is indeed the truth, that the church of England, whereof we are members, is both in its doctrine, government, discipline, and worship, truly apostolical, and in all respects comes the nearest up to the primitive pattern of any christian church at this day in the world."

In illustration of this fact, important to us as Christians and as Englishmen, we subjoin to the extracts from the apostolical fathers, the simple and very judicious explanation of the Ember days of our

church, from the third chapter of Mr. Nelson's Companion for the Fasts of the Church of England, and conclude this part of our work with the prayers, recommended on this occasion, by that pious layman and deceased member of the church of England.

DISCOURSES ON CHURCH UNION.

BY THE REV. EDWARD DAVIES,
RECTOR OF BISHOPSTONE, IN THE DIOCESE OF ST. DAVID'S.

OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMISSION IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

1 COR. IV. 1.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

FROM these words, in which St. Paul describes his own ministerial office, and that of his brethren the apostles, I shall take occasion to enquire into the constitution of that ministry, to which Christ committed the care of his church. And, first of all, I shall consider the credentials of the apostolical appointment.

When our Lord had, by his meritorious passion and death, accomplished the great work of man's redemption, and was now about to leave the world, and go to the Father, he committed the visible superintendance of his church to his apostles, in the following memorable words:—

All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things; whatsoever I have commanded you. He adds—*And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.)

Here we learn, that the power or authority, which is to be exercised in the government of the church, originally belongs to God, the Father of all: this power is given to the Son: and, by the Son, committed to his apostles. But where does it proceed afterwards? To whom does our Lord promise the continuance of his presence, even to the end of the world? It cannot be to the apostles exclusively; for they finished their course in a few years, and were removed by death from their important station. Nor can we understand this promise, as extending to every one who should take upon himself the office of a teacher; for we are told by these very apostles, and by Christ himself, *that many should come, in his name, and should deceive many.* He did not promise the continuance of his presence with such deceivers.

It was, then, to the apostles themselves, in the first instance, that this divine promise was given; and, after them, to those *disciples* whom they should have made, in all nations, and should have taught to *observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them.* For, observing all things, that were given in charge to the apostles, must include an observance of the duties of the ministry, and must, therefore, necessarily suppose a deputation of that autho-

rity, by which the ministry was constituted and established. Hence, we must regard this promise as extending to that succession of ministers to whom the apostolical charge should be duly committed; and to that church which should faithfully remain under their care and superintendance, even to the end of the world. All these our Saviour regards as so intimately united with his apostles, that he addresses them as if they had been all present:—*Lo: I am with* YOU *alway:*—with *you*, as an integral body.

In another record of the apostolical commission, we are told—*Jesus said to his apostles again, Peace be unto you! As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* (John, xx. 21—23.)

This power of absolution and authoritative censure is expressly committed to the apostles, as governors of the church, for the maintenance of good order, and the enforcement of just discipline. And, as the obligation of maintaining the decency of conduct and good order could never cease, whilst an apostolical church should remain upon earth, it must be admitted, that this power has also remained with the duly constituted ministers of Christ throughout all succeeding ages. Accordingly, we find that, in the days of the apostles, and in the times immediately subsequent to them, it was a branch of ministerial discipline, to pronounce an

authoritative censure on the disorderly and irregular, who could not, after this, be received into full communion, by any local congregation of the church, till they should have manifested signs of true repentance; and have obtained the sentence of reconciliation, from the same constituted authority.

Upon the powers with which the apostles were duly invested, they acted regularly, and orderly, for the propagation of the Gospel, and the edification of the *one* and *undivided body of Christ's visible church*, in which they were, at first, the sole ministers. But, as the work of the ministry increased with the extent of that church, they began to exercise that authority which our Lord had deputed to them, in ordaining ministers of distinct orders, each order for the discharge of its respective and appropriate office. And, that no man might have an opportunity of intruding into the ministry, without lawful authority; that the church might not be exposed to danger, nor deceived by false and self-constituted teachers, this ordination was conducted with visible form, and ostensible ceremony; one part of which was the solemn and public imposition of hands, by those who had derived their own appointment, and the power of appointing others, from Christ himself.

Thus it is recorded, that, in those days when the members of the church first became numerous, *The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men, of*

honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

Let us observe the scope of this apostolical direction. It is not said "*whom* YE, *the members of the church, may appoint,*" or "*who may appoint themselves by virtue of a special call;*" but, "*whom* WE, *the deputed shepherds of Christ's flock, may appoint.*" These candidates are required to be men of honest report, and endowed with the Holy Ghost, and with wisdom. Their qualifications were far from being mean; but these qualifications did not entitle them to take upon themselves the office of *deacons,* the lowest order of the ministry which is mentioned in the New Testament: nor did they authorise the church to invest them with that office. For this, they must have the official appointment, or ordination, of those who had been duly constituted *stewards of the mysteries of God.* Wherefore we are further told, *The church set these men before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.* (Acts vi. 2, 3, 6.)

So again it is recorded, that *The Holy Ghost said to those prophets and teachers, who were in the church at Antioch, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* (Acts xiii. 3, &c.)

These apostles had been already in the ministerial office: but they are now invested with higher powers, and with authority to appoint other ministers. Accordingly we learn that, in their subsequent travels,

they ordained them *elders*, or *priests*, in every church, or local congregation; and, *with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, on whom they believed*: (Acts xiv. 23.) And here we must remember, that the ordaining of ministers always supposes the imposition of hands, by those who were duly authorised to make such appointments; for, without this form, no man was regarded as qualified for the discharge of the sacred office. Wherefore St. Paul instructs Timothy—*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy*—public declaration—*with the laying on the hands of the presbytery.* (1 Tim. iv. 14.)

The *presbytery*, or *eldership*, which is here mentioned, takes in all the higher orders of the ministry, and includes the apostles themselves. Hence St. Peter and St. John acknowledge the title of *presbyters* or *elders*. And, in this comprehensive sense the term must be understood in the passage before us. For St. Paul says again—*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of* MY HANDS. (2 Tim. i. 6.)

Here the *gift of God* means, the appointment and authority of a Christian minister. The graces of faith and piety had been manifest in Timothy long before. From a child, he had known the Holy Scripture; yet this *gift* was not in him, previous to the putting on of the apostle's hands; and it was conferred upon him *by virtue of that act.* It is called the *gift of God*, because it is derived, in regular and constituted order, from our Lord Jesus

Christ, and from God the Father; and this, by express and official appointment.

Thus the establishment of an authorized ministry, in the Christian church, is proved by the records of the New Testament.

The Father conferred his power upon the Son; the Son committed it to the apostles; the apostles ordained others, who had the endowment of the same *gift of God*, to provide a due succession in the work of the ministry. And, for the due discharge of the sacred office, a regular gradation of ministers was provided.

We have already seen the appointment of *deacons* and *elders*, or *priests*. But, as the writers of the New Testament do not expressly mention the order of *bishops*, as presiding in the church of every district, some have taken occasion to argue, that, in the age of the apostles, no such order, as distinct from the priests, did exist: and hence they have framed an objection to the episcopal government of the church.

But, even admitting the candour and good faith of such an objection, we must still maintain, that it is founded in misapprehension.

In the constitution of the church of Christ, every thing was brought forward in regular order, and in its due season. Whilst our Lord himself continued in his public ministry, as the *visible* head and superintendant of his church, he was the great, and only, *Bishop* of their souls. He did not invest his apostles with their episcopal office, nor commit to them the charge of the flock, till he was about to leave the world, and go to the Father. They were not his

partners in authority, but his *successors* in the visible government of his household.

So, whilst the apostles continued in the execution of their charge, they were, in reality, the *bishops*, or superintendants of the visible church of Christ. Thus we find that, immediately after our Lord's ascension, the apostolical office is expressly termed a *bishopric* or *episcopacy*; and this is the rank from which *Judas, by transgression, fell.* (Acts i. 20.)

Hence we are told, that the apostles went about, *confirming the churches*; and St. Paul speaks of that which came upon him daily, *the care*, or superintendance *of all the churches.* And how they discharged their *episcopal* duty, we may fully perceive, by that record, which is termed their *Acts*, as well as by the pastoral epistles, which they addressed to the several local branches, or the general body of the church; in which they inculcate the purity of the faith, maintain good order, and enforce discipline, with all the authority and dignity, which pertain to the sacred office of a bishop. During the active period of their own ministry, then, it would have been an offence against the constituted laws of order, to appoint others to that charge, with which they themselves have been duly invested. It would have implied a dereliction of that trust, which the Lord himself had reposed in them. But when they had approached the end of their course—when they were about to be removed from their ministry, and to receive the fruit of their labours—we find that these faithful *stewards of the mysteries of God* proceeded to the appointment of bishops, as their au-

thorised successors, in the government and superintendance of the church.

Of such appointment, two illustrious examples are found in the New Testament; namely, *Timothy*, bishop of the Ephesians, and *Titus*, bishop of the Cretians. Both these were not only appointed, but also *stationed*, in their respective districts, by St. Paul, who, in his epistles to these his beloved converts, declares the authority and explains the duties of the episcopal office, with solemnity and precision. Particularly, he marks, as the prerogative of that office, the power of ordaining a succession of lawful and duly qualified ministers, for the service of the church.

Thus Timothy is exhorted, *to lay hands suddenly on no man.* (1 Tim. v. 22.) The ordination of ministers was, then, *his* prerogative: otherwise, what could such a caution have availed, if men had the power of intruding into the ministry, without imposition of hands by their lawful bishop?

Again, this charge is given to the same apostolical prelate—*Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus—And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses*—the instructions delivered at the time of thy public ordination—THE SAME COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN, *who shall be able to teach others also.* (2 Tim. ii. 2.)

Here we learn, that the ministers of the Christian church are to teach those things only which are committed to them; and that they are not to intrude into the sacred office, or to be acknowledged

as public teachers, till they are publicly, and officially intrusted with the work of the ministry.

The same apostle says to Titus—*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders* IN EVERY CITY, *as I had appointed thee.* (Tit. i. 5.)

Why is this general commission given to Titus, if the members of the church at large had authority to constitute a ministerial order of their own; or, if the elders of two or three congregations, having received ordination themselves, had the power of ordaining others? It was not so: for the *things that were were wanting*, were to be *set in order by the bishop;* and *by him also the elders,* IN EVERY CITY, *were to be ordained:* and this, by virtue of his own apostolical appointment, as superintendant of the church of Crete.

Thus we find that, in the constitution of the church of Christ, every thing was conducted in that manner in which decency, and just subordination, required that it should be conducted; and that the three orders of the ministry were successively appointed, as they became necessary, for general edification and good government. When the church at Jerusalem became numerous, *deacons* were appointed to assist the apostles *in the daily ministration.* When converts were made, and churches formed, in other cities, then *elders*, or *local pastors*, were ordained in each of those cities, the apostles still retaining the *general episcopacy*, or superintendance, *of all the churches.* And finally, when the apostles themselves were about to resign their sacred charge,

they ordained *bishops,* to whom they committed the government of the church, and, by a solemn deputation of the authority which Christ had put into their hands, invested them with power to constitute and appoint a due succession in the several branches of the ministry. But in the apostolical church, no man could be received as a minister, unless his appointment were officially and visibly derived, in an uninterrupted course, from the fountain of all authority, even from God himself.

Hence, St. Paul, speaking of the priesthood, has declared—*No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be a high priest, but* HE *that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee; as he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* (Heb. v. 4—6.)

Such is the scriptural account of the official and authoritative appointment of the stewards and misters of the church of Christ. But as this appointment has been disregarded, by various descriptions of men who profess his holy religion, it may be proper, in this place, to consider some of those pretences upon which this constitution of the Gospel has been set aside.

The principal arguments by which this irregular practice has been supported, may be reduced to the two following heads.—

1. Some have urged, that the apostles appointed their successors, under the immediate and visible direction of the Holy Spirit; and hence they infer, that, as

miracles have now ceased, as this visible direction is no longer given, Christians may lawfully depart from this primitive rule, and, by the guidance of human judgment, may safely constitute ministers, who do not derive their office in an uninterrupted succession from the apostles.

And, 2dly, as error is various and inconsistent, there are others who boldly assert, that the miraculous inspiration of the Holy Ghost has never ceased; that certain Christians have *a special and perceptible call of the Spirit* to the work of the ministry; and that such ministers must, therefore, be considered as exercising the sacred office *by divine appointment*, though they want the formality of human ordination.

With regard to the former of these arguments, it may be fairly submitted to the consideration of every serious person, whether the same mode of reasoning would not apply, with equal propriety and force, to the profession of the Christian faith, to the use of prayer, and to every ordinance of the Gospel. If one man is justified in pleading—"*The apostles officially appointed a succession of ministers, by the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost; but as miracles have now ceased, the preservation of that succession must be matter of indifference;*" if one man is authorised in saying this, why may not another be allowed to plead, that, "*In the days of the apostles, faith and prayer were attended with a power of working miracles; but as that power is now withholden, faith and prayer can no longer be indispensably required?*" The argument clearly applies, in the latter case, as properly and as forcibly as it does in the former. It is therefore

altogether inadmissible; for if it be admitted at all, there is no restraining of its operation, till it has unhinged every Christian duty.

And as this argument is inconsistent with an established profession of Christianity, so it appears to have been founded in a radical misapprehension. The appointment which the apostle made was *official*. They judged of the *apparent* qualification of the candidate for the ministry; but we are not warranted to say, that, in this discharge of their office, they had such a particular direction of the Spirit as must have laid open to them the secrets of the probationer's heart, and ascertained his future conduct. On the contrary, it is evident that this was not always the case. The persons to be ordained were not, generally, selected by the apostles. The members of the church chose them out amongst themselves, judging by their apparent fitness, and set them before the apostles, with a testimonial, and recommendation. (Acts vi.) Here it is evident, that apostolical ordination, though necessary to constitute a Christian minister, is nothing more than an *official* act.

Hence it is recorded that, as one of our Lord's chosen apostles fell by transgression, so also some of those very ministers whom the apostles officially appointed fell into apostacy and error. Such was the case with one of the first deacons, who became the founder of a pernicious schism. Had the apostles acted in this *official capacity*, under such a special direction as must have unveiled the heart of every minister whom they appointed, they could not

have had occasion to complain of those false teachers, *who were unawares introduced amongst the brethren.* In this respect, they acted upon a general rule; but a rule which was to be perpetual in the visible church. *They laid hands suddenly on no man.* They attended to the recommendation of the brethren, and judged of apparent fitness and qualification, but acknowledged that God alone can judge the heart.

But even supposing that the apostles had, in the discharge of this office, a spiritual direction, which is no longer manifest; it must yet be remembered, that miracles were not designed to be perpetual. They were only to continue *till the church should be fully established.* Thus we are told that *Christ gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists.* All these were supported by an extraordinary and perceptible influence of the divine Spirit; but how long were they to be given? Not for a perpetuity, but for a limited time, and till a certain end should have been attained. *Till we*—the church—*all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:* that is, till the church of Christ be fully constituted and established in its *unity* and *integrity.*

But was the church authorised, after these extraordinary helps should have ceased, to depart from the apostolical rule, and to appoint ministers, by some optional rule of its own? By no means. These aids were expressly given *for the edifying of the body*—or church—*of Christ: That we henceforth be no*

more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in *love*—in the bond of charity—*may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body,* FITLY JOINED TOGETHER AND COMPACTED *by that which* EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH, *according to the effectual working,* IN THE MEASURE OF EVERY PART, *maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.* (Eph. iv. 11—16.)

In this *individual* church, the laws and appointments of our great Master continue in force till his second advent. And therefore, when he sets forth the state of the ministry in this church, or in the spiritual kingdom upon earth, he represents himself as delivering to his confidential servants their several talents, with the express charge—*Occupy till I come:* From the time of the Lord's departure till his return, these talents are not to be alienated by those who had received them. And though, during his absence, he does not visibly superintend the improvement or abuse they make of his treasure; yet, at his second coming, he reckons with those servants to whom the charge has been committed, and denounces the judgment of those *other subjects*, who, in the mean time, had despised his government.

To these things the attention of every Christian is seriously called. Even amongst men, how could he be deemed a faithful servant who should contemn the commands of his master the moment he supposes that his eye is not immediately upon him, and that

his hand is not extended to direct that work which he has expressly enjoined and disposed in regular order? But we have a Master who sees, and will justly recompense every work of man. And though, for a season, he has withdrawn his visible presence, in order to prove our fidelity, and the sincerity of our obedience to his laws, it is most assuredly to be expected, that, when he returns, he will have regard to the observance or neglect of those laws; and will not pass a light censure upon those who, taking advantage of his absence, have usurped the office of superintending his household, and wrested his authority out of the hands in which he had placed it.

As to those teachers who assert a divine appointment to the ministerial office, by virtue of a special and perceptible call of the Spirit, they exhibit no other proof of such a call, than the power of preaching extemporaneously; and upon this slight credential it is, that they apply to themselves the words of our Lord to his apostles—*Take no thought beforehand, what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.* (Mark xiii. 11.)

Upon this subject I would observe that, although it be not the province of human judgment to meddle with the faith and precepts of the Gospel, yet it has its due place and office in matters of religion; and may be justly exercised upon such occasions as the present. And here an unbiassed judgment will clearly perceive, that any man of common abilities may acquire a habit of haranguing for an hour upon

any general subject, without the smallest claim to inspiration. It is also to be observed, that many of these *favoured* teachers, not long ago, were accustomed to discourse upon political topics, with an eloquence equal to any which they display in their conventicles, and with a tendency which by no means indicated the direction of the Spirit of truth.

It is not reasonable, therefore, that any man should give implicit credit to him who pretends to a supernatural power, till the presence of that power be demonstrated by some certain sign, or till it may be inferred by fair argument. And the ecstatic feelings which the ministry of these men excites in their audience, are no certain signs of the divine blessing upon their labours, or of the illumination of the Spirit: for effects still more extraordinary were produced by the fanaticism of heathen priests, inasmuch as they created an opinion of inspiration, both in themselves and in others.

The demonstration of the Spirit, in the days of the apostles, consisted in the gift of miracles and prophecy. This was sufficient: for, as God cannot deceive his creatures, no power can work a miracle in his name, but the power of God himself. But if this demonstration be now demanded, it will be replied, that it is no longer to be found in the visible church. The pretensions of these modern teachers must, therefore, be subjected to other proof. The Spirit of truth must be consistent with itself. It is not, then, to be supported in argument, that this Spirit should, in the days of our Lord and his apostles and with the demonstration of miracles, have

committed the work of the ministry to one order of men, *officially appointed*, and now, without any demonstration at all, have placed it in the hands of others.

Again; the Spirit of God in the revelation of the Gospel, and at the time when that revelation was supported by the evidence of miracles, expressly enjoins the *union of the flock of Christ*, and forbids every degree of dissension and division. It cannot, then, be maintained that, in our days, and without any degree of evidence, the same Spirit should contradict itself, abrogate the laws of the Gospel, dissolve the union of the church, and authorise unlimited separation.

The Spirit of God in the Gospel enjoins the profession of *one immutable faith*, the admission of *one consistent form of doctrine*, and the observance of *one orderly system of discipline*. TRUTH IS STILL INVARIABLE. It is, therefore, impossible the Spirit of truth should at present teach *a diversity of faiths, a variety of doctrinal systems, and an immunity from the laws of good order.*

Where there are divers systems, with regard to things thus essential, there must be error and corruption in some of the teachers. And does it not follow, that those who deviate from the truth, whilst they pretend to be under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God, are chargeable with the sin of *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost?*

And if there be but one system of evangelical truth, we must not seek to learn it from any of those who plead an appointment which they cannot pro-

duce, and, in the presumption of spiritual pride, set at nought the laws of Christ, and the constituted order of his church. Here it is our evident duty, to observe the general precept of our Lord—Go NOT AFTER THEM, NOR FOLLOW THEM.

The appointed ministers of Christ's church may occasionally err—*they have their treasure in earthen vessels;* but their errors are easily perceived and avoided by those who have the Gospel in their hands, and attend to its instructions with diligence and simplicity of heart. And therefore no Christian is authorised, upon these and the like pretences, to separate the body of Christ's church, to contemn the administration of his ordinances in the hands of his official servants, and to follow those who manifestly and systematically transgress his laws—who not only *break the commandment*, but also *teach men so.*

Such conduct with regard to a civil government would not be deemed innocent. And no government upon earth has been established upon a more regular and definite plan, than the *one visible church* of Christ; no human order of magistrates more lawfully and solemnly commissioned, than the stewards and ministers of that visible church.

DISCOURSE II.

OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

JOHN XVII. 21.

That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

WHEN we take a general view of the primitive church of Christ, as it grew up, under the care of his apostles, it must be distinctly perceived, that its first and most prominent character is that of UNITY.

However the individuals, or the several congregations of which that church consisted, may have been locally dispersed, they composed but one harmonious brotherhood united together, and consolidated by the use of the same sacred ordinances, the profession of one common faith, and the acknowledgment of one system of doctrine, which they received *not of man but of God*, and, therefore, deemed it unchangeable. And the indispensable obligation of maintaining this unity, is taught and enforced by Christ himself.

Thus, when speaking of the gentile converts, who were to be added to the society of his disciples, he

says—*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold*—which are not of the house of Jacob;—*these also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* (John x. 16.) From which passage it evidently appears, that these sheep do not properly hear his voice, till they hear him calling them into the *one fold* of his visible church.

Accordingly, our blessed Lord, in the words of my text, earnesly prays to his Almighty Father, that his whole visible church upon earth, or *all who should believe in him, through the word of his apostles*, might be preserved in perfect peace and unity amongst themselves; and he insists upon this unity, as a powerful argument to convince the world that he came from God.—*That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

In order that we may be duly impressed with the force and energy of these words, I shall consider the time and occasion upon which they were spoken; and take a brief view of some important events with which they stand connected.

They were spoken by our Lord in that same night in which he was betrayed; at a time when he was taking a solemn and affectionate leave of his apostles, before he submitted to die upon the cross for the redemption of our fallen race. In the evening of that day, he had retired with the twelve into a private room, to celebrate the feast of the passover —to commemorate the sacrifice of that Lamb which,

by the effusion of his blood, had preserved the chosen people of God from the power of the destroying angel.

This consecrated rite was to the families of Israel not only a monument of a great deliverance, but also a pledge of union and mutual harmony. They were all commanded to observe the same ordinance: and those friends and neighbours who assembled in this celebration, never separated from each other's society during the sacred solemnity: for it was ordained—*In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth of the flesh thereof out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.* (Exod. xii. 46, 47.) Wherefore our Lord says to his apostles—*With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.* (Luke xxii. 15.) And for this purpose he assembles his little flock at the same table with himself.

But because a more sacred lamb, even Christ our passover, was to be slain on the morrow; because the passover was to be *fulfilled in the kingdom of God;* our Lord, in order to impress upon their minds the true design of this great solemnity—this hallowed pledge of union in the congregation of Israel, immediately connects with it the Christian sacrament of his holy supper: for, *as they were eating the paschal lamb, Jesus took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body*—this is, henceforth, your passover.—*And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for*

this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt. xxvi. 26—28) He also commands them—*This do in remembrance of me.* (Luke. xxii. 19.) Do what? *Be all partakers of the same bread and of the same cup: use this sanctified rite of hospitality in commemoration of your mutual fellowship with your dying Saviour and with each other.* This was surely a most sacred pledge of union amongst the disciples of our Lord. But how abundantly is the obligation of this union enforced by the impressive and pathetic charge with which it was accompanied, and which is recorded by the evangelist St. John!

The great lesson inculcated by this institution, is thus opened by our blessed Lord. He declares to his apostles, that he should be betrayed to death by one of the chosen few who had received bread from his hand. And when this ungrateful wretch had withdrawn for the perpetration of his meditated design, he says to his faithful associates, *Little children, yet a little while I am with you!* When their attention is fully awakened by this tender address, he proceeds—*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* (John xiii. 34, 35.) Thus we find that the first thing impressed upon the minds of the apostles, by this holy rite of hospitality at their Lord's table, is that *unity*, that mutual love and affection, which he points out as the peculiar mark of all his true disciples; as the characteristic by

which they were to be distinguished in the sight of all mankind.

From this injunction of union in affection, our Lord proceeds to enforce the necessity of professing a sincere faith in the Son, as united with his heavenly Father.—*Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God: believe ye also in me.—I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.—He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.—I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*

Whilst they preserve this union of love and this purity of faith, he assures them that the prayers which they make in his name shall not fail of their due effect. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* But, lest they should retain a presumptuous confidence in his favour, whilst they neglected his laws, he repeats the charge—*If ye love me, keep my commandments.* And again—*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

This obedience to his precepts, which Christ requires of his disciples as a proof of their love to him, and as a pledge of the divine love to be manifested in their own souls, has an especial reference to that *new commandment* of union and mutual affection, which is ratified by the solemnities of their present meeting—by the memorial of a dying Saviour.

Wherefore our Lord continues—*Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you.* And this peace is to be evident to all mankind; for it is to operate to this end—*That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.*

Our Lord had already taught his apostles that the conviction of the world, in this particular, was to arise from an observance of their mutual love and union. And, to illustrate and enforce this important lesson, he goes on to represent his universal church under the figure of one individual vine. Of this vine he himself was the root or stem, and his disciples constituted the several branches. To their continuance in the unity of this sacred vine, or church of Christ, it is essentially required, not only that they profess the true faith of the Gospel, and bring forth the general fruits of righteousness; but also that they keep his commandments;—*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* And here, as if his whole law were summed up in the new commandment which he now gave them at the institution of his holy supper, this, *and this alone,* is repeatedly impressed upon their hearts:—*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I gave you commandment. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.—I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye*

shall ask of the Father, in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Thus the great duty of maintaining union and mutual love is indispensably enjoined to the members of Christ's church. Upon the observance of this command depends their proficiency in the ways of righteousness and the success of their prayers. Our Lord again assures his apostles, that, whilst they maintain this love and union, the prayers that they should make in his name would be accepted of his Father. It is also upon the sanction of this duty, that he confirms the great promise of sending the Holy Ghost, to direct their judgment, to sanctify their hearts, and to abide with them for ever. And he closes this solemn address by declaring, that his design in speaking these words to his apostles was, that *in him they might have peace*, though they should have tribulation in the world.

Thus we see that the main intention of this memorable charge is, to urge the absolute necessity of union and harmony amongst the members of Christ's church. What an impression must it have made upon the souls of his apostles, inforced as it was by the heart-rending circumstances of that awful night, when their kind and compassionate Lord was taking a tender leave of his assembled friends, and going to suffer a cruel and ignominious death; especially when they had before their eyes the elements of that holy ordinance, which commerated his *dying for their sake!*

Can any thing be conceived which would have more deeply impressed the duty of shewing their love to their divine Master, by keeping his *new commandment*, and cherishing a spirit of union and harmony amongst themselves? Yes—our attention is called to greater things than these.

We must remember, that all this took place in the same night when our Lord, *being in an agony, prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* (Luke xxii. 44.)

Having closed this charge to his apostles, he turns to his Almighty Father with the most powerful intercession in their behalf, praying that he would keep them *in unity* and *in truth:—Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are! I pray not that thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that thou wouldest keep them from the evil.—Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* And now he adds a prayer for the whole body of his church upon earth;—*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word*—that is, for the Christians of all ages and nations who should believe through the preaching of his appointed ministers—*that they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in*

me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

Such is the tenor of the *communion office*, as it was administered by Christ himself—such the great law of union and harmony in his church, which is ratified by this holy ordinance—an ordinance in which all his disciples are commanded to commemorate his death till he come again to judgment: and we find it repeatedly urged, that this union and harmony of his church is intended as a powerful argument to convince the world of the certainty of our Lord's mission from God the Father; and, therefore, of the truth of his religion.

It is, then, evident, that this *new commandment* has a direct application to the whole of his *visible* church here upon earth: for in no other acceptation of the words can this argument apply to the *world in general.* And such being the union of love and mutual affection, which is essentially required in the church of Christ—in that church, for which our Lord intercedes with his heavenly Father, and to which, alone, he promises the communication of his glory—it may be asked, Where is this divine principle now to be recognised amongst the professors of his religion? Do the members of the various assemblies of our days maintain that perfect union, which is the essential mark of true Christianity? If they do not, where is the ground of their confidence towards God, or what lesson do their strife and divisions offer to the world?

To the solemn charge of the dying Redeemer—to his earnest prayer for the preservation of his universal church in perfect unity and peace—all the apostles of Christ attended with reverence and deep humility, and with a feeling of that love which was enjoined by their blessed Lord—all, excepting one, who, though a professor of ostentatious zeal, had now withdrawn from their society upon a separate scheme of his own: but woe to that man who shall follow his example! All, excepting that one, revered and observed the *new commandment* of their Master, and continued in perfect unity.

At the time when this injunction was given, they they had all been partakers of *the same bread* and of *the same cup:* and as this commemoration of Christ is the most sacred solemnity amongst his disciples, the church has given it the name of *communion,* or mutual fellowship, and has always esteemed its joint celebration as the highest pledge—as the hallowed test of obedience to the commandment of the Son of God; and of the maintenance of that union which must characterise the true members of his church. Hence, St. Paul says—*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body:* FOR WE ARE ALL PARTAKERS OF THAT ONE BREAD. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.)

Thus we see that our Lord taught and enforced the necessity of maintaining the unity of his church; and that a devout participation in this most sacred

ordinance, and, therefore, in every act of public worship, is required, as a necessary proof of our love to him, and of our obedience to his commands.

Let us, therefore, my brethren, be perfectly united in one heart, and in one mind, that the world may believe that Christ was sent from God the Father, and that we are his true disciples.

DISCOURSE III.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

JOHN XVII. 21.

That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may know that thou hast sent me.

THE great duty of preserving the unity of the church, in obedience to the command of our divine Master, was, in the apostolical age, emphatically asserted, and zealously maintained; inasmuch as this church is represented as one individual body, of which Christ is the head. Thus the Apostle tells us, that the Father *gave Christ to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.* (Eph. i. 22, 23.) Nor is this body to be regarded as an undistinguished mass, without internal order and harmony of parts: for the same apostle exhorts his converts, that they, *speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body*

unto the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. iv. 15, 16.) And, in another place, he speaks of *holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* (Col. ii. 19.)

Thus it appears, that the Church of Christ is a *well-organized body*, in which every member has its due place and office, and the several parts have a mutual subserviency and co-operation to the good of the whole. Wherefore St. Paul exhorts, *That there be no Schism*—or breach—*in the body; but that all the Members should have the same care one for another.* (1 Cor. xii. 25.) He does not speak of the local congregations of the church as distinct bodies; for *we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another.* (Rom. xii. 5.)

In another place, he says—*God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.—Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment.* (1 Cor. i. 9, 10.)

St. John also declares—*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* (1 John i. 7.) Thus we learn that, in compliance with our Lord's new commandment, the apostles inculcated the essential lesson of *unity* in mind, in judgment, and in af-

fections, amongst the true professors of Christianity. And we shall presently see, that one principal end, for which a regular and duly authorised ministry had its appointment, was the maintenance of this union, which was consolidated, not only by the use of the same sacred ordinances, but also by the profession of one common faith, and the acknowledgment of one uniform system of doctrine. Many, indeed, have urged the plea of *Christian liberty*, for the disturbing of the constituted order of the church in these particulars. But it is clear, that this great principle of liberty, as unfolded by the apostles, does not extend to the setting aside of the authorised ministry, or the dissolving of the integrity of Christ's body: so neither does it furnish the slightest pretence for any innovation in its faith, or the doctrine of its teachers; the purity and identity of the faith being essential to the very being of the church. Our Lord prayed to the Father, that all those who should believe in him through the word of his apostles, might be preserved in perfect unity. Accordingly, we are told that the three thousand who were converted at one time by the preaching of St. Peter—those first fruits of the church—*continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayer.* (Acts ii. 42.)

These converts not only received the doctrine of the apostles as they had been taught, but continued perfectly united with them, and with each other, in the congregation of the faithful, in the use of the sacred ordinances, and in the form of worship. They did not satisfy themselves with a *general belief* in the

truth of the Gospel, and then withdraw into little separate assemblies to comment and debate upon that truth, and to shape out doctrines and opinions for themselves, each after the dictates of his own judgment, or the conceptions of his own fancy; all which they might have done without the dread of civil restriction: for at that time the uniformity of Christian faith and worship was not enforced by penal laws. But such an extent of liberty was not warranted by the Gospel; and had these men enforced the claim as it is urged in our days, they would not have been acknowledged as true converts. The apostles admitted of no such latitude. On the contrary, we hear St. Paul, *the prisoner of the Lord,* beseeching the Ephesians, *that they walk worthy of their vocation, wherewith they are called, with all lowliness and meekness, and long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.—For,* as the apostle proceeds, *there is one body*—one visible church—*and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord,* ONE FAITH, *one baptism.* (Eph. iv. 1—5.)

Wherefore, as it follows—*Christ gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.*—For what purpose were they given? was it for the founding of various sects and denominations; No! They were given *for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: till ye all come,* IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, *and of the knowledge of the Son of God,* UNTO A PERFECT

MAN—unto one undivided church—*unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Was the church, after this, to separate into different parties and denominations? By no means. The divine purpose, in giving this organised ministry, is expressly stated to be—*That we, henceforth, be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* This latter clause has a reference to certain teachers, who are not acknowledged as *apostolical;* whose great principle is not *unity*, but *separation;* who, instead of holding fast the *one faith*, teach a *variety of doctrines*, shifting about as the inconstant winds, and, instead of edifying the saints in simplicity and godly sincerity, *with cunning craftiness, lie in wait to deceive.* The words are St. Paul's. They are descriptive, but I need not apply them.

This whole passage sets before us, in the apostolical church, a due order, and just gradation of the ministry: some of them, indeed, extraordinary, and only stationed for a time, till a certain end should have been obtained, such as *apostles, prophets*, and *evangelists;* and others, permanent, and continual, such as *pastors* and *teachers*; but all of them *given by Christ*, or invested with their several offices according to his declared and express appointment; and all directing their labours to the attainment of one great end—*the edifying of the church, into one perfect and undivided body, united in the acknowledgment of one immutable faith:* and all appointed, likewise, for the express purpose of guarding this church, against those

various winds of doctrine—those *seeds of error and division*, which conceited and unauthorised teachers were already furnished with, and waiting an opportunity to scatter amongst the brethren.

And the frustration of these deceivers was a charge of no trifling moment: for the unity and purity of the faith—the ground-work of all true Christianity—are matters of such weight, that their absolute necessity is inculcated throughout the apostolical writings. Thus St. Paul charges the Philippians, that they *stand fast, in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.* (Phil. i. 27.)

And St. Jude declares—*It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.* v. 3.—ONCE DELIVERED! for the faith is, *one*, and it is *delivered from heaven.* It is no human speculation, to be remodelled by the private judgment of individuals, and accommodated to the progress of science, the state of society, or disposition of the times.

And, that there might be no room for doubt or hesitation as to the nature of that faith, which was uniformly and indispensably required in the members of Christ's church, our Lord himself declares its great and leading articles, when, just before his ascension, he commands his apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them in the name of the* FATHER, *and of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST. The faith, therefore, in which all these disciples were to be baptized, included a belief in the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity. And

the profession of this faith was required, previous to baptism, of every adult convert to the apostolical church, whether from Judaism or Heathenism. And when, during the period of infancy, the *children of Christians* were received by baptism into the congregation, the profession of the same faith was demanded, in their name, of those who made themselves responsible for their religious education.

Our Lord also taught his apostles, that *himself and the Father are one, insomuch that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* (John v. 23.) We learn, moreover, that the *Holy* Ghost is the *spirit of the Father*, and the *spirit of Christ;* and, therefore, that the *three persons of the Godhead are essentially one.*

This is the faith which was received in the *one body* of the apostolical church; and the church maintained it, because it was revealed in the word of God, and because the true members of Christ acknowledge that God is wiser than man.

In vain, then, have the adversaries of the church raised disputes and cavils as to the time when this faith was introduced into the world; in vain have they brought its principles to the test of their infidel philosophy. All true believers are established upon a rock. They are satisfied with the assurance that *it is the faith of the Gospel;* that the Son of God delivered it with his own mouth; that it was confirmed by the Holy Ghost speaking in his apostles; and that the same faith had begun to unfold itself in the very first page of the sacred volume, where we are taught, *that God,* the su-

preme Father, sent forth his *Word* to call the universe into existence; that the *Word* went forth at his command, saying, LET THERE BE LIGHT! AND THERE WAS LIGHT; and that the *Spirit* of God moved upon the face of the waters, producing order out of confusion. But it must be further observed, the faith, which united the apostolical church, did not consist in the mere acknowledgment of names and titles, leaving their respective import to be fixed and explained by the various judgments or speculations of men.

The conceptions of the church, relative to the persons of the Godhead, must be regulated by the revealed word of God. It is a Christian duty to receive and admit that identical account of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which the Spirit of Truth has declared in that word—*to believe in God, upon his own authority.* As *no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,* (Matt. xi. 27.), it is an essential duty to receive, without contradiction or debate, that revelation which the Son of God hath given of his Almighty Father. And in this revelation we are taught, that he not only made the world, and all things therein, and that he continually sustains them in existence, *by the word of his power;* but, also, that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John iii. 16.)

So also, on the other hand, as *no man knoweth the Son, but the Father,* the ONE FAITH of the

church enjoins the belief of that revelation, which the Spirit of the Father hath made, of the Son, throughout the holy Scriptures:—*that he came down from heaven, and was made man*—that, *for our salvation, he suffered affliction and death*—that *he rose again for our justification, and ascended to the Father*—and that *he shall come, in the last day, to judge the quick and the dead.*

And, as the Holy Ghost is *the Spirit of Truth*, which *guided the apostles into all truth*, the faith of the church does not rest in a bare acknowledgment of his name and existence; but includes a belief of all things which he spoke, by the mouth of the apostles and prophets; and relies, with unshaken assurance, upon that sanctifying influence which he has promised to the souls of the faithful.

So that, upon the whole, the faith which unites the church of Christ—that faith which it professes in the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*—embraces those great truths by which we are assured, that the three persons of the blessed Trinity concurred in the plan of human salvation, and the sanctification of true believers. It extends from the very foundation to the highest pinnacle of our hopes, and lays hold of the immortal reward of Christian obedience.

The substance of this faith, the church from the earliest times set forth in its *creeds*, or compendious forms of profession. These were neither distinct revelations in themselves, nor were they systems of mere human device. They were summaries of the leading and essential articles of that one faith, which

was received by all true believers, collected from the doctrine of our Lord and his apostles.

For this doctrine, as it still remains upon record in the writings of the New Testament, is the sacred and complete canon of Christian faith, and is not to be moved by the various opinions and doctrines of men. Wherefore St. Paul thanks God, that the Romans, *who had been the servants of sin, have now obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine whereunto they were delivered.* (Rom. vi. 17.)

These were, now, as much in subjection to the faith of the Gospel, to the form of apostolical doctrine, as they had been, during their unconverted state, in subjection to sin. The church had no deliberative power over this doctrine; no right to add, to diminish, or distort. It was its duty to believe and obey. For the faith of the Gospel is a light from Heaven: it must be received in its native splendour; not scattered, disjointed, and discoloured, as men receive the rays of the sun through a prism.

And therefore no teachers of schism and heresy, no perverters of the faith, could be comprehended, or tolerated, in the apostolical church. *Now I beseech you, brethren,* says St. Paul, *mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them.* (Rom. xvi. 17.)

In like manner, he had besought Timothy to abide at Ephesus, *that he might charge some to teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions*

rather than godly edifying, which is in faith. (1 Tim. i. 3, 4.)

If the apostle gave this charge to Timothy, we must infer, that he had not left him upon a level in the church with those *false teachers* whom he thus reproves; but invested with spiritual authority, to execute and enforce his commission. In the same chapter, he also declares, *that the law*—that law which demanded the obedience of the church —*was made for every thing that is contrary to sound doctrine*—to the doctrine of the Gospel—*which was committed to his trust.* But how was it committed? This also the apostle explains. It was not because he felt an impulse in his own mind to become a minister, and acted spontaneously upon that impulse; but *because Jesus Christ had put him into the ministry.* In another place, he charges Timothy —*Take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine. Continue in these things: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* (1 Tim. iv. 16.) And again, he gives him this instruction— *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth: supposing that gain is godliness.—From such withdraw thyself.* (1 Tim. vi. 3—5.)

Titus also receives instruction, that it is required, in a bishop, to *hold fast the faithful word, as he*

the wilful neglect of the written oracles of God, and walking by the directions of fallible men, or the surmises of our own hearts, as much a deed of ours as any thing we can commit? And who will dare to affirm, that, for such a deed, he shall not be called to an account? No sincere disciple of Christ, who has been taught *to observe all things whatsoever he commanded his apostles*, can make this assertion.

Let us, then, turn away from every thing that will be consumed in the day of judgment, and attend to the infallible word of God, which teaches us to acknowledge the UNITY of the visible church of Christ, committed to the charge of one united ministry, appointed by the great Shepherd of the flock; and the unity of an incorrupt and immutable faith and doctrine, as necessary to secure to us the promises of the Gospel.

And in this holy unity may God preserve us, that we may have fellowship, not only with each other, but also with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Holy Ghost, in the unity of the Godhead, be ascribed all honour and glory, now and for ever.—*Amen.*

DISCOURSE IV.

OF THE UNITY OF OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF CHRIST.

MATT. XXVIII. 20.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

IN order that the world might believe that God the Father sent his Son from heaven to redeem our fallen race, and might obtain a true knowledge of the blessings which he purchased for us, our divine Master formed his church into one harmonious body, compacted together by the use of the same sacred ordinances, and the profession of one common faith. But to the establishment of his religion—the unfolding of the ample design of his sacred mission—something more than this was to be required of his disciples. For, if what the Scripture declares be true—that *faith, without works, is dead, being alone;* that *the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;* and, that *our Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people,* ZEALOUS *of good*

works; (Tit. ii.)—if such be the inefficacy of a barren faith, such the great purpose of Christianity, and such the character of real Christians; it must be deemed essential to the very being of the church of Christ, that the faith of its members should manifest itself in an uniform course of obedience to his laws.

And the necessity of such obedience, our Lord himself, in his general charge to the apostles, expressly connects with the profession of the true faith. *Go ye, and make disciples all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*—this clause is declarative of that one faith, which the apostles were to deliver to their converts; but the next enjoins obedience—*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

The obedience which Christ demands of these disciples is in conformity with his own example, in fulfilling the will of his heavenly Father. And this sacred lesson is inculcated throughout the whole period of his public ministry. When he first entered upon the work of his mission, by submitting to the baptism of John, he declares—*Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* (Matt. iii. 15.) And from henceforth we find him regular and constant in attending the established form of worship in the synagogue, and in the temple, exhorting his followers *to observe and do whatsoever was commanded by those who sat in Moses' seat,* or upon whom the ministerial office lawfully devolved; and enforcing that great truth, that *he came not to destroy, but to*

fulfil the law. And, as the disciple is not greater than his master, he gives this general charge to all who receive his doctrine—*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me*—follow my example—*for I am meek and lowly in heart*—I have, in all things, submitted to the will and appointment of my Father; submit ye, therefore, to me—to me who lay down my life for your sake! and this submission is required as a testimony of our love and gratitude to our divine Benefactor. If we are his true disciples, surely we cannot refuse it. *If a man love me, he will keep my words*—and his obedience shall not go unrewarded; for, *my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.* (John xiv. 23.) And again: *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* (John xv. 10.)

Obedience is, therefore, required, not only as a testimony of love and gratitude to our blessed Lord, but also as the very condition upon which we obtain the love of God, and secure to ourselves the great promises of the Gospel. Wherefore our Saviour exposes the folly and delusion of those who pretend to be his disciples, without a sincere and predominant purpose of obeying his laws. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?* And then he proceeds, by a forcible similitude, to illustrate the difference between a true and false professor:—*Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them*—whosoever professeth to be my disciple, and hath faith productive of obedience

—I will shew you to whom he is like—He is like a man who built an house, and digged deep—reflected deeply on the nature and efficacy of true faith—*and laid the foundation upon a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that, without a foundation, built an house upon the earth*—upon a mere superficial and unstable faith—*against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.* (Luke vi. 46, &c.)

Here we perceive that an attention to Christian obedience is compared to the act of that man who digs to the rock of true evangelical faith, and laws a solid foundation upon it. And the necessity of such an operation is admitted, in general, by most professors of Christianity. Many of them, however, take a very imperfect view of this primary and most comprehensive duty: they think that nothing more is required by it, than an habitual regard to the great precepts of morality contained in the Gospel; that even here, great allowance is to be made to particular situations in life, and the general frailty of human nature; and that they may safely dispense with the use of positive ordinances, as things which, in their estimation, are of far less importance. But where is the authority for such a dispensation? The Gospel has granted no such liberty: for our Saviour expressly declares—*Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so*—shall not only allow himself to transgress, but also maintain the lawful-

ness of dispensing with universal obedience—that man *shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*—shall not be acknowledged as a true member of my church;—*but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* (Matt. v. 19.)

It is, from hence, fully evident that our Lord gives no authority or countenance to that doctrine which systematically dispenses with obedience, even in the smallest matters. And, as his apostles taught the Gospel as they had received it, we hear St. Paul declaring to the church, that the enforcement of obedience upon the genuine principle of evangelical faith, was one great end of the apostolical mission:—*By whom,* says he, *we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.* (Rom. i. 5.)

And again, still addressing the church at Rome, he says—*God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine whereunto ye were delivered.* (Rom. vi. 17.) Where we must observe, he does not give thanks because they had been sinners; but because they had renounced the service of sin, and become sincerely obedient to the laws of Christ.

And that the characters of *obedient* and *disobedient* professors might be duly discriminated from each other, he says again—*I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them: for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly*—their own

carnal conceits—*and, by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple: for your obedience is come abroad unto all men.* (Rom. xvi. 17, &c.)

By this passage we are taught, that, in a sincere course of obedience to the laws of Christ, there is no occasion of offence or division; that offences and divisions are gross instances of disobedience to those laws; and that those men who, by their crafty and imposing speeches, introduce such disorders, are not the real servants of the Lord, and are therefore to be avoided.

In another place the apostle sets forth to the church of Corinth, the labours of his spiritual warfare, in *casting down imaginations*, or vain and conceited reasonings, *and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God*—against the purity of revealed truth—*and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience*—to restrain it by authoritative discipline *when your obedience is fulfilled.* (2 Cor. x. 5, 6.)

By this we see that the principle of disobedience exists in the imaginations and vain thoughts of presuming men. These human devices are to be cast down, that the obedience of the church may be simple and sincere—may be held as of equal necessity with the profession of a sound faith. And the reason is plain: for *Christ is become the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him*—(Heb. v. 9.)—and to them only.

And, as obedience in general is a duty of indispensable obligation to the disciples of Christ; so,

in particular, a due submission to the authorised ministers of the Gospel, and, therefore, to the subject of their ministry, is necessary for preserving the unity of the church: and the obligation of this submission is enforced by our Lord himself.

When he sent forth his twelve apostles to proclaim the approach of the kingdom of heaven, and to heal the sick, he thus denounces the judgment of those who should reject their ministry:—*Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.* (Matt. x. 14, 15.)

Again, in the same chapter he declares—*He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* And again, in another place—*He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* (Luke x. 16.)

Such is the sanction of that law by which a due submission to the authorised ministers of Christ is enjoined. And the apostles acknowledge the compliance of the church with this religious duty. Thus St. Paul testifies of the Galatians—*My temptation, which was in the flesh, ye despised not nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.* (Gal. iv. 14.) And again, he peremptorily declares to the church of the Thessalonians—*He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God,*

who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. iv. 8.)

As obedience and respect, in the office of their ministry, are thus claimed by the apostles, according to the ordinance of God, and in virtue of the sacred commission which they bear; so we find the same duty is also binding in behalf of those duly appointed ministers who supplied their place, and succeeded them in the care of the church.

When St. Paul sent Titus to Corinth for the work of the ministry, he confidently assured him that he would be received by the church with that respect and attention which were due to his office and character. The apostle's expectation, in this particular, was amply verified, as he afterwards acknowledges. —*Our boasting*, says he, *before Titus, is found a truth; and his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence in you in all things.* (2 Cor. vii. 14.)

And again, when he sendeth one of his fellow-soldiers and companions in labour to the church at Philippi, it is with this injunction—*Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all goodness; and hold such in reputation.* (Phil. ii. 29.)

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, the duty of paying just respect to the authorised ministers of the church, is thus interwoven in a charge preserve its unity and internal tranquillity:—*Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, edify one another,*

even as also ye do: and we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake: and be at peace among yourselves. (1 Thess. v. 11—13.)

Timothy is thus instructed in the government of the church: *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* (1 Tim. v. 17.)

And finally, the thirteenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews contains some remarkable passages to the same purpose.—*Remember them,* says the apostle, *which have the rule over you*—an official charge of superintendance—*who have spoken unto you the word of God;* WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW, *considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with various and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart should be established with grace.* (Heb. xiii. 7—9.) And again: *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.* (v. 17.)

Thus it appears that, in the apostolical church, the ministers and people are placed in a state of mutual obligation and responsibility. The former are entrusted with a commission to superintend the flock, to direct and instruct them in the pure faith

and holy discipline of the Gospel. As this is a most weighty charge, upon the due execution of which the welfare of the church greatly depends, we find they must render to their common Master a strict account of their stewardship. The people, on the other hand, are required to hold their ministers in high respect and honour. It is not meant that they should indulge them in whatever self-importance they may think proper to assume; for personal respect must, in a great degree, depend on the personal character which the individual supports: but ministers are to be respected, in their official capacity, with a reverential regard to *him* whose authority they bear.

It is also required of the people to submit to the ministers of Christ, as vested with his authority, to receive the faith and the rules of Christian conduct which they teach out of the Holy Scripture, as coming from Christ himself: not to give heed to various and strange religious doctrines, which originate in human imagination; but to take care that their heart be established in the divine grace of the Gospel; for they also are concerned in the account which their ministers must render to God, being responsible for the improvement or abuse which they have made of the means of salvation.

And a religious observance of the duties which arise from this mutual relation, between the ministers and people, is an essential part of that general obedience which is required to the laws of Christ. And it is even contrary to human reason, to suppose that

any of his disciples has a right to dispense with this obedience, upon which the unity and harmony of his church necessarily depend.

Were we to hear the subject of a civil state exclaiming in the streets, "*Of those magistrates who are regularly commissioned by our sovereign, I take not the least account. I am free. I have a right to constitute what magistrates I please, and am determined to acknowledge none but those who are of my own choosing:*"—Were he to open the volumes of the law in our presence, declaring, "*In this statute I perceive a fitness and propriety, and am, therefore, content to observe it; but as for that clause and the next, I wholly reject them, and counsel all my friends to resist their operation:*"—Were he to say, when called upon for his contribution to the support of government, "*All those taxes which are imposed upon me by the statutes of the realm I am resolved to disallow: to pay them, were an offence to my principles, and to my conscience. I will contribute what I think proper, in what way I please, and when it suits my own convenience. But this I will not pay to the appointed officers. I am the proper judge of those persons who ought to receive my bounty:*"—Were we to hear such language and witness such conduct, should we not be impressed with a full a conviction of this man's disaffection to the lawful government—should we not dread the propagation of his pernicious principles?

But were the same disorderly person to proceed—"*I am high in the favour of our wise and righteous king. So peculiar is his regard for me, that what-*

ever my judgment and will dispose me to do, is, in his estimation, the best that can be done: and I am confident that he will promote me to a rank high above all those who inculcate the observance of his written laws, and study to enforce their regular execution:"—such a speech would immediately change our sentiments. We should no longer abhor the rebel, but begin to pity the maniac.

Yet such precisely is the conduct, and such, in effect, the language of many who call themselves the followers of our blessed Lord, *but do not the things which he commands.* And so great is the blindness of mankind in matters of religion, that even these deluded persons have influence enough to draw away multitudes of disciples after them, whilst the awful sanctions of the Gospel, and the care of their own immortal souls, prove insufficient to impress this great and simple truth, That the church of Christ is constituted as one undivided body, and that it is required of every Christian, in the pale of this union, *to observe all things whatsoever he commanded his apostles.*

DISCOURSE V.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

MATT. XXVIII. 20.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

THAT no great sin can be committed without some heinous act of impiety against the Supreme Being, some notorious crime against the order and welfare of society, or some remarkable vice which debases the private character below the standard of fashion and popular opinion, is an idea too prevalent amongst us. An offence in either of these respects, is certainly a grievous sin; yet the simple and primary notion of sin, is the transgression of a declared law and ordinance of God. Hence, as Christ is a teacher come from God, universal obedience to his laws, and an unfeigned observance of all things which he appointed in the constitution of his church, are indispensably required of all his disciples, as they would avoid the imputation of sin, and the danger of its punishment.

It therefore behoves every one of us seriously to consider how far these laws extend; and to take special care, that we do not heedlessly or presump-

tuously, upon selfiish motives, or with the palliation of a separate judgment, dare to transgress what we may deem *the least commandment*. For this is the original blemish of our nature, for which the Son of God shed his blood upon the cross. And that nothing contributes more to the forfeiture of God's favour, than a careless neglect of his positive ordinances, is a momentous truth, inculcated throughout the Holy Scriptures. Of this I shall, upon the present occasion, lay before you some remarkable instances.

When our first parent came before his offended Maker, sinking with shame and confusion, and trembling with conscious guilt, he was not asked—*Hast thou dishonoured my holy name? Hast thou injured the partner whom I gave for thy comfort?* or, *Hast thou cruelly treated those creatures which I had made subject to thy power?* But,—*Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat? Hast thou disobeyed my voice, and transgressed my sovereign decree?*

The eating of an apple, from a tree growing in that very garden which was committed to his care, must have been an offence trivial in itself, and such as, in these days of liberty, would scarcely be deemed an offence at all. But the sin did not consist in this act, *simply considered*. It lay in the transgression of that law, by which the act was prohibited: and the laws of God are as sacred, at this moment, as they were in the day of the creation. And the influence, under which the law was then violated, appears to have been the same which still

leads men into numberless transgressions; namely, that of a separate and deliberative judgment, set up in opposition to a sacred duty.

The woman avows her knowledge of an absolute interdiction, pronounced by God himself. She could therefore have no right to deliberate. But she did deliberate. *And when she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.* This was an act deliberately committed, against a known law, and upon selfish motives. The fruit, in the first place, allured her sensual appetite; and self-love prompted her to indulge that appetite:—*the tree was good for food.* In the next place, it recommended itself to her fancy:—it was *pleasant to the eyes;* and her separate judgment complied with the gratification of her vanity. And, in the last place, it flattered her pride:—*it was a tree to be desired to make one wise.* And thus sin gradually rose to the summit of its climax. If a separate judgment be allowed to act at all, in opposition to the laws of divine order, it is impossible for it to withstand such motives as those which presented themselves to our first mother. They are so powerful and universally prevalent, that St. John, with manifest allusion to this history, declares, that all the evil which is in the world consists in *the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life.* (1 John ii. 16.)

These are the things which introduced sin into the world; and they still operate whenever we at-

tend to selfish motives, and allow the deliberation of a separate judgment, in opposition to the declared will of God. Eve began to sin the moment she began to deliberate. She had attended to a false and seducing teacher. Her judgment, now perverted, promised her greater happiness, in the gratification of her appetite, her vanity, and her pride, than in a persevering obedience to the command of her Maker.

As for Adam, his motive to sin was one which is at this day too prevalent in the world—he implicitly followed a corrupt example. The woman *took of the fruit, and did eat: and she gave to her husband with her, and he did eat.*

This act, however trivial in itself, was an act of disobedience to a declared law of God; and to what a height of impiety it presently rose from this low beginning, we may easily judge, when we hear the offender casting the blame upon his Creator, for having placed a seducer in his bosom;—*The woman,* says he, *whom thou gavest to be with me—she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

Thus we see that sin, in its original form, even that sin which humbled the whole race of Adam, resolves itself into an act of disobedience to a positive law; and an act perpetrated under the presumed liberty to exercise a separate judgment.

How closely this blemish adhered to our nature may be learned from those pathetic exhortations to obedience, from the many blessings promised to it, and from the dreadful woes denounced against disobedience, which the great lawgiver of Israel has

left upon record, throughout the book of Deuteronomy. And, under the Mosiac dispensation, we have frequent examples of the punishment of disobedience, and neglect of the divine law, even in cases which we should be too apt to deem perfectly venial, and some of which had very plausible circumstances in their favour.

Thus, it was a declared commandment of God, that his holy name should be held in reverence. And this law was not to be disobeyed with impunity. Accordingly, we are told that when two men strove in the camp of Israel, one of them blasphemed, or spoke lightly of the name of the Lord, and uttered curses. Here an act of disobedience must be admitted. But then it might be pleaded, in mitigation of punishment, that the offence was committed under the impulse of momentary rage. This, however, was no excuse. The Lord commanded—*Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.* (Lev. xxiv. 10, &c.)

Again—

God commanded that the sabbath-day should be kept holy. But *while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks on the sabbath-day.* This action was trival in itself, and so it must have been in the judgment of the offender. But it was an act of disobedience: therefore the Lord said—*The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones, without the camp.* And this sentence was executed. (Numb. xv. 32, &c.)

The Lord commanded that the *Israelites should hold the spoils of the Canaanites in abomination, and should not desire their silver nor their gold.* (Deut. vii. 25, 26.)

But, in contempt of this precept, one of the men in Joshua's army secreted part of the spoil. In consequence of this transgression, there was wrath upon the whole congregation, and the Lord refused to go forth with Israel any more, till the offender should have been punished with death. (Josh. vii.)

The men of Beth-Shemesh disobeyed an express command, by profanely looking into the ark of the Lord; and their sin was punished with the death of more than fifty thousand persons. (1 Sam. vi. 19.)

We also learn, that the venerable Eli was a righteous priest of the Lord; but his sons committed such trespasses as would have been disgraceful in any professors of a holy religion, and were utterly heinous in the sacred office which they filled. And though the Lord had authorised and commanded parents effectually to restrain the crimes and vices of their children, (Deut. xxi. 10, &c.) Eli neglected the enforcement of this law, and satisfied his conscience with the mildness of parental reproof:— *He said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?*

This kind parental reproof would have suited one of the good fathers of the present day: but this was not obeying the commandment of God; it was not fulfilling the duty of a judge of Israel. There was, therefore, a severe denunciation of wrath against Eli, for this mistaken tenderness to his sons; and the reward of disobedience overwhelmed himself, and his whole family, in one dreadful day. (1 Sam. ii. and iv.)

Very remarkable also was the punishment of disobedience in the case of Saul. At a time when he was at war with a formidable enemy, the prophet Samuel sent him forward to Gilgal, and promised to follow him, in the space of seven days, to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. (1 Sam. x. 8.) He waited the seven days, but the prophet was not come. The enemy in the mean time were advancing to attack him, with thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude. When the men of Israel saw this, they were in a strait; for the people were distressed, and hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits, and some of them fled over Jordan. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all that remained of his army followed him trembling.

The time appointed had elapsed: the prophet was not come. The enemy was surrounding him, and his own forces were dispersing on every side.

In this distress he began to deliberate, and took the resolution to offer a burnt offering. Under such circumstances, this decision of private judg-

ment must surely be deemed venal, if private judgment can ever be allowed to decide in opposition to a sacred ordinance. But no sooner was the act perpetrated than the prophet came, and denounced to Saul the forfeiture of his kingdom, as a punishment of his disobedience, and of his presumption, in taking upon himself the exercise of a sacred office to which he had not been appointed.

On another occasion, the same prince is sent, by the command of the Lord, utterly to destroy the Amalekites. Here, again, he deliberates in the execution of his charge, and saves the king of Amalek alive. He also brings back the best of the flocks and herds, to sacrifice unto the Lord. But he is thus reproved by the prophet:—*Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.* (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.)

Obedience to the divine command is, then, a duty which no palliative circumstance, no right of private judgment, can set aside; excepting in cases of omission, at such times when a ritual happens to interfere with a moral duty.

The punishment of Uzza is another example, which proves that no plausible excuse, or favourable circumstance, can justify an act of disobedience. We read, that when David was conveying the ark of

the Lord to its place, in a new cart, this Israelite *put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it, because the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and God smote him there, for his error, and there he died, by the ark of God.* (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.) The Lord had committed his ark to the charge of the priests, and had commanded that none of the people should touch any holy thing, on pain of death. The act of Uzza was a transgression of this law; and neither his mistaken zeal, nor even his pious intention, could atone for his disobedience.

Again; it was an ordinance of God, that his prophets should be treated with honour and respect, in consideration of the sacred character which they bore. (Numb. xii. 8, 9.) When, therefore, Ahaziah's officers, contemning this law, came in an irreverent manner to summon Elijah into the presence of their master, the prophet commanded, *and fire came down from heaven, and consumed them and their companies.* (2 Kings i. 10, &c.) And when another prophet was mocked, even by little children, who met him as he was going up into Bethel, he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two bears came out of the wood, and tore forty and two of them. (2 Kings ii. 23, 24.)

By men of greater presumption than piety, these and similar passages have been adduced, as furnishing the most shocking proof of the cruelty and inhumanity of the ancient prophets. But is it not the part of a right judgment to advance one step further, to take a higher ground, where it must be

perceived that prophets were not distinguished from other men by any power inherent in themselves; that the miracles which confirmed their word were not performed by human means, but by the spirit of God; and, therefore, that these miracles, as acts of the Almighty, must have been essentially right, and must be acknowledged as examples of the displeasure of God, at the sin of disobedience and and contempt of his laws? But it will be objected by others, that these examples occurred under the rigour of the Mosaic dispensation, and, consequently, that they are altogether foreign to the merciful œconomy of the Gospel.

Such language is not uncommon. It is, however, a dreadful mistake, to suppose that the Gospel shews more indulgence to sin than the law of Moses; or that it denounces on the offence of disobedience a punishment less certain, or less severe. On the contrary, as it has given us a clearer and more extensive prospect of our duty, so it has expressly declared, that, *to whom much is given, of him much will be required;* and it has taught us, *that the servant who offends through a comparative ignorance of his Lord's will, shall be beaten with few stripes; whilst that servant who knoweth his Lord's will, and prepareth not himself, neither doeth according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* (Luke xii. 47, 48.) This is the law of equity, and it is the law of the Gospel. Both the covenants which God made with man were dictated by the same spirit—by that spirit which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Their difference with

respect to the sanctions of obedience is only this;—the Mosaic law, being designed for a single nation, which occupied a narrow territory, constituted the civil code of that nation. Its sanctions were, therefore, of a temporal kind, and the punishment of disobedience was public and immediate. Whereas the Gospel, which embraces all the nations of the earth, is of a more spiritual nature. As it has, by ascertaining the resurrection of Christ, demonstrated the certainty of a future state; as it has declared the responsibility of every man, at an appointed day of judgment which is yet to come; so it has, for the most part, deferred the punishment of disobedience to the solemnity of that great day.

Consequently, enormous offences have been committed under the Gospel, with an appearance of temporal impunity. Thus, when one of our Lord's chosen disciples, with a seeming exertion of *reason*, and of *zeal*, in *reforming abuses*, and professing an extraordinary degree of *sympathy with the poor*, but, at the same time, forgetting that respect and submission which were due to his divine Master, presumed to blame an action which that Master both allowed and approved;—when this pretended *reformer* and *philanthropist* exclaims with indignation—*Why was this waste of the ointment made? for it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.* (Mark xiv. 3, 4.);—we do not find that this act of disrespect and insubordination was immediately punished. The offender was dismissed with this gentle rebuke—*Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought*

a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good; but me ye have not always: as much as if our Lord had said, "*Ye have always an opportunity of exercising your benevolence to the poor; but let not that important duty interfere with the other claims of religion.*"

The same disciple, on another occasion, approached his Master at a time when he was in great affliction, and saluted him with apparent kindness and respect. This was, indeed, a preconcerted signal to point him out to his enemies, who were now seeking his life; but the private judgment of the offender may have suggested to him, that he had now a fair opportunity of promoting his own interest at a trifling risk, and gratifying a feeling of resentment for the late rebuke; that the known goodness of his Lord would easily forgive him; that his miraculous power would immediately defeat the purpose of his enemies; and that he himself was only furnishing an occasion for the display of that power. Such may have been his ideas; for it appears, from the sequel of his history, that he did not expect what really followed; and that, like a self-sufficient, *rational Christian*, he did not implicitly *believe all the words that Jesus had spoken.* But, whatever his thoughts may have been, the deed was done. The offender was not immediately punished. His Lord only said to him—*Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?*

Thus we see that, under the Gospel economy, the execution of wrath does not always immediately

follow the offence. But, notwithstanding the gentleness and forbearance of our divine Lawgiver, Judas, the *rational Christian*—the *zealous reformer*—the *virtuous economist*—the *distinguished friend of the poor*—and the *respectful greeter of his Master*, had no reason to congratulate with himself upon the prudent choice he had made: he fell a victim to the remorse of conscience. And it is but little consolation to those who, under the merciful dispensation of the Gospel, presume to disobey the laws of order, that they have the prospect of escaping, *as he escaped.*

Yet, that no Christian might lose sight of the awful sanctions by which obedience to the law of holiness is enforced, the New Testament contains some remarkable instances of the temporal punishment of the disobedient. The conscience of Judas produced one of these examples: the history of Ananias and Saphira furnishes another; which occurred at the very time when the apostolical church was first established. And here we are presented with a practical lesson. We are told, that, in the infant state of the church, *as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need.* (Acts iii.) This regulation, which arose from temporary expediency, does not appear to have been enforced by a general law of the church. Those who did not claim a share in the distribution, were not compelled to resign their

property: for St. Peter says to Ananias, *while it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?* The crime of this man and his wife consisted in this:—Having *partially* contributed to the common stock, they pretended to have laid down their whole property; and upon this pretence they claimed, as members of the church, their full proportion in the distribution that was to be made: thus committing an act of fraud, under the semblance of an honest zeal for the cause of religion.

And it was naturally to be expected that similar offences would be committed by men of worldly minds; that such men would vainly pretend to the full privileges of the church, without submitting to their share of its burdens: it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, that these dissembling professors should be punished with immediate death, as examples to all future ages. And if there be any Ananiases in the present day, they may be assured that the ways of God are still equal; that he does not punish one and excuse another for the same crime. Notwithstanding, therefore, many escape with impunity in this life, they only *treasure up unto themselves wrath, against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* (Rom. ii. 5.) *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that* OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

That we may all obtain mercy in that day, may God give us grace, not only to acknowledge the true faith of the Gospel of Christ, but also *to observe all things whatsoever he commanded his apostles.* So shall we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

DISCOURSE VI.

OF CHARITY, THE BOND OF UNION.

JOHN XIII. 35.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

THE great bond by which the faithful and obedient members of Christ's church are preserved in perfect union and harmony with each other, is CHARITY, or mutual love: and without this, their fellowship cannot be complete. For men may assent to the same principles of faith, and, externally, observe the same rules of conduct, whilst they are wholly disunited amongst themselves in heart and affection. But Christianity extends its influence beyond the profession of the lips and the going of the feet: its great office is, to bind the heart with the bond of charity.

And as charity is essentially necessary to the perfection of union, and the maintenance of harmony, in the flock of Christ, so it is most expressly and indispensably enjoined in his Gospel.—*A new commandment*, says our Lord, *I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* And the observance of this duty is the most prominent characteristic of his true

followers; for it is added—*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

From these words it is evident that the virtue of mutual love was to manifest itself in the uniform and public behaviour of Christians; otherwise it could not become notorious, and the subject of remark to *all men*, or to the world in general. Its operation, therefore, was to pervade, not only the spiritual and invisible, but also the *visible church*. Accordingly, our Lord prays for those who should believe in him through the word of his apostles, that is, for the Christians of all nations, and of all succeeding—*that they all may be one.* And this he does with the same reference to the general conviction that must result from their visible and ostensible union—*that the world may know that thou hast sent me.* (John xvii. 21.)

This principle of union, then, which is seated in the heart, the proper throne of charity, is required to diffuse its influence to the external behaviour of every member in the visible church of Christ; so as to render itself the subject of daily observation to all mankind.

And in this light the divine command of our great Master is understood and enforced throughout the writings of his apostles.

Walk in love, saith St. Paul, *as Christ also loved us.* (Eph. v. 2.) WALK IN LOVE, *that is, Regulate your deportment in the sight of the world, according to the principle of mutual charity.*

And again:—*As touching brotherly love, ye need*

not that I should write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And, indeed, ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more—that ye MAY WALK HONESTLY TOWARD THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT. (1 Thess. iv, 9—12.)

"*If ye fulfil the royal law,* saith St. James, *according to the Scripture—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself—ye do well.* (James ii. 8.) So also St. Peter:—*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.* (1 Pet. i. 22.)

St. John declares—*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and* THERE IS NONE OCCASION OF STUMBLING *in him*—his conduct neither gives offence to the church, nor reflects discredit on his profession;—*but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.* (1 John ii. 10, 11.)

Again:—*In this the children of God* ARE MANIFEST, *and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God; neither he that loveth not his brother: for this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that ye love one another.* (1 John iii. 10, 11.) And yet further:—*This is his commandment, That ye should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.* (V. 23.) Of such importance is this great duty, that we presently find

it again inculcated:—*This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loveth his brother also.* (Chap iv. 21.)

Such are the injunctions with which this duty of charity is enforced—such the appeals that are made from its visible operation to the minds of mankind in general.

The same great lesson is so emphatically and so repeatedly impressed, that from hence some men have been ready to suppose that charity comprises nearly the whole of practical religion, and consequently have circumscribed the peculiar duty of Christians, by the limits of mutual forbearance and brotherly love.

Without charity, it is true, there can be no perfect union amongst Christians; and Christianity itself, as it is taught in the Gospel, cannot subsist without it. But one part of religion, though a principal part, will not stand for another, much less for the whole. To guard, therefore, against any mistake of this kind, the apostles, in recommending to their converts the practice of this virtue, have taken care to recommend it in *conjunction with faith and obedience.*

Watch ye, saith St. Paul to the Corinthians—*Watch ye: stand fast in the faith: quit you like men: be strong. Let all your things be done with charity. I beseech you, brethren—ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that ye submit yourselves to such, and to every one that helpeth with us and la-*

loureth. (1 Cor. xvi. 13—16.) Here we perceive the great duty of charity guarded, on the one hand, with the necessity of vigilance and stedfastness in the profession of the true faith; and, on the other, with the duty of submission to the authorised ministers of the Gospel—to every one who helped and laboured with the apostles. And the great apostle of the Gentiles, in the midst of his afflictions, is comforted by the good tidings which he receives of the *faith* as well as of the *charity* of the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. iii. 6.); to whom he says, in another place—*We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you toward each other aboundeth.* (2 Thess. i. 3.)

Timothy receives instruction, That *it is required of Christian matrons to continue in faith, in charity, and in holiness, with sobriety.* (1 Tim. ii. 15.) And to the same apostolical bishop it is given in charge—*Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.* (1 Tim. iv. 12.)

In like manner Titus is commanded—*Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine—That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in the faith, in charity, in patience.* (Tit. ii. 1, 2.)

And to the whole church of Christ this charge is delivered by St. Peter:—*Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.*

For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. i. 5, 8.)

From all which it is plain that, as without charity it is impossible to be a practical Christian, so, on the other hand, no degree of this divine virtue, no liberality of spirit, no overflowing of benevolence, will constitute a true disciple of Christ, unless it be attended with purity of faith and sincerity of obedience.

Charity is not to be cultivated instead of any one Christian grace; but it is the ornament and perfection of them all. And being intimately blended with the essential requisites of pure religion, it becomes the great principle of harmony and union in the flock of our Redeemer.

Our Lord, as we have already seen, prayed to his Almighty Father, that all the members of his church *might be made perfect in one.* What was to be the general connecting bond of this perfect union? It was Christian charity; or that mutual love and benevolence which Christ had enjoined to all his disciples. Hence St. Paul charges the church of Colosse—*Above all these things put on charity which is the bond of perfectness*—(Col. iii. 14.)—that is, of the perfect union which our Lord requires amongst his disciples. And the same apostle reminds the Ephesians to be continually attentive to this great and essential duty, *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* (Eph. iv. 3.)

And how adequate this Christian principle is to the preservation of peace, and perfecting of the communion of saints, may be collected from the enumeration of its qualities which St. Paul has given us in his first epistle to the Corinthians.

This celebrated passage has been the subject of frequent comment: but it has not been sufficiently considered in the connection in which it really stands. It is introduced by the apostle as part of a solemn charge, in which he enforces the absolute necessity of *union* in the church of Christ. That church he represents, in the preceding chapter, as one individual body:—*For as the body*, saith he, *is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ*—so is Christ, as united with his undivided church. Therefore the apostle proceeds to enforce the charge—*that there should be no schism in the body; but that all the members should have the same care one for another.* And as he continues—*whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Each of you is a member of that one undivided body, the whole of which is pervaded by one vital principle, and every part of which has a mutual feeling and affection with all its fellow members. This can never be the case if schisms and separations prevail amongst you.

Therefore, the apostle adds, *God hath set in the church*—hath expressly appointed an ordinate gra-

dation of ministers for the preservation of due harmony in this one body.

Having described the several departments of the ministry, and exhorted the members of this one church *to covet earnestly the best gifts*—to endeavour to excel each other in usefulness for the general edification—he proceeds, *And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way*—A way to what? A way, as the construction of language and the consequence of argument demonstrate, to the preservation of this perfect unity of the church, this communication of feeling and affection, and the avoiding of contention and schism, which destroy the unity of the body.

And this way is *charity*. The way of charity is often spoken of in our days, as allowing free scope for divisions and separations of all kinds: but how has the apostle described it?—*Charity suffereth long, and is kind. Charity envyeth not. Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity; but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things: Charity never faileth!*

We see, then, that the charity which the apostle recommends is a most comprehensive principle; but within its ample limits there is no place for division. It lays an effectual restraint upon all those errors into which men are prone to be seduced by an excess of self-love, or a fondness for their own opinions. It humbles the proud spirit of insu-

ordination. It checks every instance of rash judgment, puts upon every thing the best construction which it will fairly bear, and makes to others every concession which is consistent with *truth* and *integrity*. Can they deserve the name of Christians whom this amiable principle will not unite?

Such is the nature of that charity which constitutes the perfect bond of union in the church of Christ. And it is so essential to the character of his disciples, that from them it must flow, in its proper gradation, to all mankind.

For it is our Lord's command—*Love your enemies: bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* (Matt. v. 44, 45.)

But the love here enjoined is that of benevolence or good-will, not of esteem and approbation: for, comprehensive as the influence of this divine principle certainly is, we never find that it is the part of Christian charity to countenance error, dissention, and division. Its proper office is not to authorise, but to prevent them: and where this good end cannot be obtained, charity still disposes us to preserve a friendly and benevolent disposition—not to cherish a spirit of rancour and hatred, or seek an opportunity for revenge—to recommend the offender to the *mercy*, and not to the *judgment* of God—to pray for his *reformation, not for his punishment*.

But in no instance whatsoever must true charity be directed to the extinction of a temperate zeal in a good cause, to the corruption of our principles, or the perversion of our judgment. We are not enjoined by charity to forbear with any thing that is expressly forbidden in the Gospel; to regard essential truths, or the corruption of those truths, as things indifferent; or to connive, with affected liberality, at the manifest errors and irregularities of men.

Our Saviour, whose practice is the best comment upon his precepts, thought it no breach of charity to reprove the profane conceits and infidelity of the Sadducees; to pronounce a solemn woe upon the pride, ostentation, and hypocrisy, of the Pharisees; or to testify in the face of the Samaritan separatists —*Ye worship ye know not what.*

It was no part of his benevolence to dissemble the difference between truth and error, righteousness and iniquity, obedience and disobedience; or to palliate, in the ears of men, the severity of that account which they must render of their deeds in the last day.

The apostles of Christ, with equal frankness, recommend Christian charity under its just and necessary limitations.—*Now the end of the commandment*, saith St. Paul, *is charity.* (1 Tim. i. 5.) *But what charity?* Does he mean an easy concession to the opinions and optional practices of men, such as the liberality of our days—a charity which abstains from reproof, and marks

neither error nor corruption? Far from it. It is *charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and faith unfeigned.* And to shew us that this charity is not a principle of *indiscriminate* forbearance, it is immediately added—*From which some, having swerved, have turned aside into vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.* That charity, then, which is *the end of the commandment*, is not blind to the vain conceit and ignorant presumption of these *false teachers*, nor does it abstain from an open reprehension of their proceedings. St. Paul goes further—he uses active means to restrain their pernicious practices: for we are told, in the preceeding verses, that he has left Timothy at Ephesus, for the express purpose *that he may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*

In another place he proposes to the same Timothy, his own apostolical character as a model for his imitation:—*But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience.* (2 Tim. iii. 10.)

Here let us pause—*Long-suffering, charity, patience!* Where these good qualities in the apostle's own character are pointed out for the imitation of those ministers who are to succeed him in the government of the church, we might expect to find, if anywhere in the New Testament, that accommodating spirit which resolves the essentials of Christianity into sincerity of devotion, under the sole direction of private judgment, and takes the profes-

sion of men as a sufficient credential of that sincerity.

With what surprise, then, and disappointment, must the advocate of modern liberality peruse the context!—*This know also*, saith the apostle, *that, in the last days, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their ownselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*

The characters which are here exhibited with all this selfishness, arrogance, contempt of every virtue, relative and personal, and violation of every law, sacred and human, public and private—such characters cannot surely be recognised in civil society, unless it be amongst the thoughtless and profane, who live without hope, and without God in the world. So it might be thought; but this is not the apostle's meaning. The men are professors of religion in their way—*having a* FORM *of godliness, but denying the power thereof.*—Not producing those fruits which necessarily spring from true godliness; or even worse than this—denying that godliness ought to produce the fruits of righteousness.

But how was the great principle of charity to operate in behalf of such professors? Was the faithful minister of the Gospel to acknowledge them as *dissenting brethren*—to connive at their irregularities—to make allowance for the *tenderness of conscience*, the *freedom of opinion*, and the *rights of private judg*—

ment?—those general pleas of disorder and insubordination! No! The commandment is—*From such, turn away!*

Let us, then, consider their character more attentively, that they may be distinctly known in order to be thus avoided: for as we now live in those *last* and *perilous* days, we must suppose that some such characters have already appeared.

We find that they are not only nominal professors, but pretended *teachers* also, though *separatists* from the church. *For*—as the apostle continues his bold but accurate sketches—*For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women*—persons of weak minds and little reflection—*laden with sins*—amongst some sectaries we have heard as a maxim, "The greater the sinner, the greater the saint;"—*led away*—that is, seduced from the apostolical church—*with divers lusts*—with a variety of irregular desires and visionary fancies—*ever learning*—professing a continual reform and improvement in the system of religion—*but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*—never apprehending the pure truth of the Gospel. *Now as Jannes and Jambres*—the Egyptian wizards—*withstood Moses*—the authorised minister of God—*so do these also resist the truth*—their mind is always fruitful in cavils and trivial objections.—*Men of corrupt minds*—heady and self-conceited—*reprobate concerning the faith*—void of judgment, as to the immutable faith of the Gospel.

But—the apostle adds—*they shall proceed no further*—they may *resist*, but they shall not *over-*

throw the truth; the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church;—*for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as that of the Egyptian wizards also was.*

Notwithstanding this general exposure of their folly, they discover no marks of a salutary reformation: they return not to the bosom of the church: for *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse; deceiving and being deceived.*

How needful, then, was the charge which the apostle subjoins to the bishop of the Ephesians!—*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them*—that is, not of a self-appointed and fanciful teacher, but of an authorised and faithful minister of Christ. (2 Tim. iii.)

Such is the discrimination of error and corruption: and such the freedom of censure and reproof with which the *long-suffering*, the *charity*, and the *patience*, of the apostles are tempered and qualified; and such the *charge* to *avoid the erroneous and the corrupt*, and to *continue stedfast in the faith and discipline of the Gospel*, which marks that very passage, in which these forbearing virtues are recommended, to the imitation of the ministers of Christ.

Upon the whole, then, it appears, from a due consideration of the precepts of our Lord himself and his apostles, compared with their example and practice, that Christian charity is not a principle which disposes us to *please* upon all occasions—to sacrifice conscience and integrity at the altar of peace—to accommodate, or even to countenance,

any kind of disorder in the nominal professors of our religion. The very essence of this virtue is *benevolence:* it therefore disposes us, at all times, to desire, and, whenever we can, to promote, the good of mankind without distinction—to abstain from evil —to preserve a just regard to the feelings of others, but without violating the integrity of our own consciences. Its operation, therefore, though always *salutary*, is not always *pleasing;* and when duly exercised amongst the faithful and obedient members of Christ's Church, it becomes the great bond of peace and union, which gives to that church its visible grace, its harmony, and perfection.

Let us, then, my brethren, in obedience to our Lord's command, have love one to another: for thus shall we be preserved in the unity of his church, and all men shall know that we are his true disciples.

DISCOURSE VII.

OF THE LAW OF DISCIPLINE.

2 COR. XIII. 10.

I write these things, being absent, lest, being present, I should use sharpness according to THE POWER WHICH THE LORD HATH GIVEN ME TO EDIFICATION, AND NOT TO DESTRUCTION.

THE Christian religion in the days of the apostles, and for some ages afterwards, was not countenanced and supported by any public and national authority. No civil power espoused its cause. Hence it becomes a question worthy of our attention. Under what sanction and by what law was due order maintained amongst its numerous professors, and the censure of discipline, when necessary, effectually enforced?

That there was some such law, that it was a law of the Lord, and that it was confirmed and ratified by powerful sanctions, so that, upon urgent occasions, it might be exercised with *sharpness*, are particulars which we learn from the words of the text, as well as from many other passages of the New Testament.

In order to discover how any law of discipline could be thus sanctioned without the aid of the civil

arm, and what that law was to which the primitive Christians actually submitted, let us first of all consider the constitution of the apostolical church.

This church consisted of one community, or spiritual body politic; for, however its members were locally dispersed, they were all united into one fraternity, by the profession of the same faith, by an uniform obedience to the precepts of the Gospel, and by the common bond of charity or brotherly love. This fraternity of believers was placed under the care of the apostles, and of those ministers whom the apostles should officially constitute and appoint. And beyond the limits of this united fraternity, the acknowledged church of Christ did not extend. It included no sectaries. Neither Christ himself nor his apostles recognised any professors who separated themselves from this constituted body, either upon principles of faith, or rules of government and discipline. Our Lord, indeed, had foretold, that many such separatists should come in his name, saying, *Lo! here is Christ, or lo, there!* but the general charge to his disciples is—*Go not after them, nor follow them.*

Here, then, we may perceive the grounds of sanction, by which the law of discipline might be enforced. As union and fellowship with the apostolical church were essential to the very being of a Christian, so a due submission to the internal regulations of that church was requisite to preserve the individual in its essential unity. And it was by this sanction that a law of wholesome discipline was ratified and enforced for the edification of the

church, for the maintenance of Christian obedience, and the preservation of good order and a godly conversation.

Under the operation of this discipline, smaller offences were corrected by admonition, reproof, and brotherly censure; but the obstinate and irreclaimable was punished by a separation from the communion of the brotherhood.

And such a law of discipline was promulgated and authorised by our Lord himself, who directs, that the offending brother, if he first of all despise private admonition, and then neglect to hear the church, is to be regarded *as an heathen man, and a publican.* Thus we find, that the church derived from its great Master a power of censure, extending so far as to place the contumacious out of its communion and fellowship; and this power is vested in the apostles, and their duly constituted successors. For our Lord immediately adds—*Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* (Matt. xviii. 17, 18.) And again, just before his ascension, he solemnly commits this same power to his apostles, in the following words:—*Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* (John xx. 23.)

From hence it is clear, that the censures and absolutions which the authorised ministers of the Gospel justly and officially pronounce for the orderly government of the church, are recognised at a higher tribunal. And this is the power which St.

Paul tells us in the text, that the Lord hath given him;—a power to discard the disorderly member from the communion of the faithful, so that, without sincere repentance, and public reconciliation, he shall no longer be acknowledged as a true disciple of Christ. And whosoever despised this power, which was only to be exercised in the one apostolic church, must be considered as renouncing the government and denying the authority of the Son of God.

Here the latitudinarian exclaims—"*What! so rigid an enforcement of uniformity, without any toleration, or liberty, for those who may happen to think otherwise! What is this but setting up the most horrid sytem of tyranny.*"

Were Christianity that undefined thing which many in the present day suppose it to be, there might be some weight in such an objection; but if we take our account of this religion from the tenor of the Gospel, all argument of this kind must be entirely divested of their force. There we find, that the flock of Christ is to be governed as one united society; and of this society no man can be deemed a member who refuses submission to its laws and regulations. Without this, he cannot be a *Christian:* but he is not therefore deprived of his natural liberty; he may be whatever else he pleases.

It follows, that the enforcement of uniformity *in the church,* is no more a tyranny, than the enforcement of the established laws in any other community. The power of discipline is spiritual, not temporal. In the age of the apostles, as well as in this in which we live, there was a *choice* permitted to every indi-

vidual. No man is compelled to be a Christian at all. But if Christianity be his choice, it is better for him to be a Christian in reality, than in vague and licentious profession, like the Nicolaitans of old, or the disciples of Simon the sorcerer. And men cannot be real and orderly Christians, without submitting to the laws of Christ, and continuing in the unity of the apostolical church.

The Gospel informs us of no independent sects, which might receive the excommunicated person into another division of Christ's mystical body. No such division is acknowledged. When the official sentence is pronounced, the offender is separate from the communion of Christians. He is in the state of the unconverted; and therefore, said to be delivered to Satan—*to that spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.*

And this sentence was pronounced, not only upon the profligate and immoral, but also upon those who corrupted or perverted the faith. Thus St. Paul exhorts Timothy, to persevere in *holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith, have made shipwreck: of whom,* continues the apostle, *is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom* I HAVE DELIVERED UNTO SATAN, *that they may learn not to blaspheme.* (1 Tim. i. 19, 20.)

And the like severity of censure was consequent upon the perpetration of notorious crimes; as in the case of the incestuous person, in the church of Corinth: to which church the apostle writes—*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are ga-*

thered together, and my Spirit, with the power—or authority—*of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.* (1 Cor. v. 4, 5.)

It has been supposed by some, that the phrase *destruction of the flesh*, which is here introduced, authorises the infliction of temporal punishment, and the delivering over of the offender to the secular arm; but, as the secular power did not in that age recognise the censures of the church, and, as the apostle tells us in the text, that the Lord has given him a power *to edification, not to destruction*, I conceive that the word *flesh*, in this passage, means nothing more than *carnal affections* or evil passions; and that the *destruction of the flesh* is the mortification of such affections and passions. St. Paul does not therefore, recommend that a sentence of capital punishment should be executed on the person of the offender by the secular arm; but that he should be subjected to such spiritual censure, that he could no longer proceed in this irregular practice, upon a vain presumption of his privilege, as a member of Christ's visible church.—As much as if he had said—"*Let him be removed from our communion, out of the spiritual kingdom of our Lord, and consequently into the dominions of Satan, that a sense of his lost condition may bring him to true repentance, and promote his reformation.*" And this meaning of the passage is implied in the last clause—*that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord:* for the offender's dying

in impenitence, or in a state of alienation from the communion of the apostles, could in no sense have conduced to his salvation.

Thus we find that the most severe censures of the church were directed to edification, and not to destruction. And when, as in the present case, they had produced their salutary effect—when the offender had brought forth fruits of sincere repentance—with what parental tenderness does the apostle receive him again into communion! *Sufficient*, says he, *to such a one is this punishment, which was inflicted of many: so that, contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest, perhaps, such a one should be swallowed up with too much sorrow: wherefore I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love towards him.* (2 Cor. ii. 6—8.)

Such was the great law of discipline. It consisted in the power of censure and absolution: its end was edification; and its sanction, the essential unity of the visible church. It was committed by Christ himself to his apostles, and by them delivered to those ministers who lawfully and officially succeeded them in their sacred charge.

Thus St. Paul instructs Titus the bishop of the Cretians—*These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee.* (Tit. ii. 15.) And again—*A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.* (Tit. iii. 10.) By *rejecting* we must understand the removing of him out of the communion and fellowship of the church.

And as this law of discipline is a law of the Lord, so it has, in its motive, its nature, and its effect, an exact conformity with his providential methods of dealing with his people. Hence we may consider St. Paul as describing both the one and the other, in the epistle to the Hebrews.—*Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children —My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not?—Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which chastened us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us, as it seemed meet to them; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, no chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* (Heb. xii. 5—11.)

Though this passage, in its primary acceptation, refer to the general sufferings to which, by the providence of God, the church should be exposed, yet it takes in the true notion of the chastisement of discipline—the salutary end it is calculated to produce—and the duty of submitting to it with patience and humility. It is the paternal correction of an offending child inflicted in love; and, however grievous for

the present, designed and calculated to effect his reformation and improvement. It is a *power which the Lord has given to edification, not to destruction.*

Notwithstanding, therefore, the lawful exercise of this power has sometimes been miscalled *persecution*, it is a thing, in its nature and object, totally distinct from it.

Persecution is the fruit, not of love, but of wrath and misguided zeal: its professed view is to promote the cause of religion; but it acts under the influence of the angry passions, and, therefore, aims rather at the punishment of the offender than at the removal of the offence. And this disposition can originate only in an ignorance of the true spirit of religion, both natural and revealed.

Wherefore, our Lord declares to his disciples—*They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you,* BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE FATHER NOR ME. (John xvi. 2, 3.)

Such was the temper with which the apostles James and John contemplated the apostate and inhospitable Samaritans, when they said to Jesus—*Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?* (Luke ix. 54.)

They aimed not at reformation, but punishment. And so agreeable to their irritated passions were the thoughts of revenge, that they would not commit the chastisement of their adversaries to the power and justice of Christ, though he was present amongst them, but desired to take the work into their own

hands. The words are not—*Wilt thou punish?* but—*Wilt thou that* WE *command fire?*—Wilt thou gratify us with a power, and commission, to destroy?

This was a feeling so diametrically opposite to the true Christian temper, that it merited a sharp reproof:—*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*—the dispensation, which I am now come to publish, is for the salvation of the obedient, and not for the temporal punishment of the disobedient. The same lesson he inculcates upon another occasion:—*If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not*—I condemn him not to present punishment:—*for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.* But, lest it should be inferred from hence that the laws of the Gospel might be contemned with safety, it is immediately added—*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.* (John xii. 47, 48.)

Whence it appears that, as there is a day appointed for the judgment of the disobedient, the ministers of Christ must refer the obstinate and contumacious to the ultimate decision of that day: they can only, agreeably to the import of the words, *(Anathema Maran atha), set them apart till the Lord comes,* They cannot, in the mean time, claim a power to inflict temporal punishments beyond the verge of that law of discipline, which was committed to them for the preservation of due order in the church—

a power which is directed to *edification, not to destruction.*

Our Lord's precepts are enforced and explained by his practice: and upon the present subject it may be remarked, that when he cleansed the temple from those profane traffickers who were polluting that holy place, *he made him a scourge of small cords, and drove them out.* (John ii. 15.) He did not handle the sword, the spear, or the bow. The instrument which he used might produce present smart, but it could not endanger the lives of men. His design was not to destroy, but to correct.

And when he sets forth the state of his household —the church, in succeeding ages—and delineates the character of those servants who should be entrusted with its government during their Lord's absence, he thus speaks of the persecuting steward:—*If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him off, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (Matt. xxiv. 48, &c.)

The ruler of Christ's household was not authorised to *smite in wrath:* therefore, St. Paul, with manifest allusion to these words of our Lord, gives this instruction to Timothy—*A bishop must be blameless; not given to wine; no striker.* (1 Tim. iii. 3.)

This is a general rule; for it is again repeated to the apostolical bishop of the Cretians—*A bishop*

must be blameless, as the servant of God; not self-willed; not soon angry; not given to wine; no striker. (Tit. i. 7.)

The steward of Christ's household, or the Christian bishop, is invested with an authority which no member of the church can safely despise; but his authority is spiritual, as the same apostle declares —*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds*—(2 Cor. x. 4.)—that is, as he proceeds to explain—*to the casting down of imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.* But these weapons are not to be used in the indulgence of human passion and revenge; for the apostle presently speaks of his authority as given him by the Lord, *for edification, and not for destruction.*

And the use of carnal weapons, or the exercise of a power to punish and destroy, in order to correct errors in religion, is not conceded in a single page of the Gospel of Christ. Our Lord often instructs his disciples how to endure persecution; but I find no direction how to persecute. Whenever, therefore, persecution is mentioned, the saints are represented as merely passive. The active part of their commission goes no farther than this—*Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican;* and *Shake off the very dust of your feet, for a testimony against them.* (Luke ix. 5.) It therefore stops short of the very first step of persecution.

As an indulgence of the angry passions denotes an unchristian spirit, so it is wholly inadequate to any purpose for which the Gospel was designed. It may

destroy the body, but it cannot reform the heart. For St. James has justly remarked—*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* (James i. 10.) Our penal laws may teach thieves to act with caution; but they have no power to render them sincerely honest: and such, likewise, is the defect of persecution. It may produce many hypocrites; but it can never make a real Christian.

In our age and country the thing itself is happily unknown. The trial of saints, at present, is not by the *fire of persecution,* but by the *desolating waters of indifference.* Persecution is not seen nor felt amongst us, though its name is often heard, and many are ambitious of the credit of having submitted to its stroke. During many ages, it was the part of the most approved Christians to suffer for righteousness' sake. The enduring of evil wrongfully, was the mark which distinguished a saint. It is, therefore, no matter of surprise, that the hypocrite should still be desirous of counterfeiting the mark, in order to give a currency to his own character.

Hence, it is no uncommon thing for those who would *appear righteous before men,* to boast of their sufferings, to complain of the lash of persecution, and pretend to have encountered it in the place where it was not to be found.

But few counterfeits will bear the test of accurate comparison: and this, in the present case, will expose the spurious impression. Saints are patient under real persecution; whilst hypocrites are always ready to cry out under imaginary sufferings. Saints never covet persecution: for however indifferent they

may be to their own sufferings, and however willi
to suffer for Christ's sake, they know that persec
tion cannot be exercised without sin; and no since
disciple of Christ can be a voluntary accessary
the sin of another. To all this the hypocrite is i
different and insensible. His only aim is to obta
the credit of sanctity, by displaying the mark of pe
secution. But, even were the impression genuine,
is a subject of obvious reflection, that persecuti
cannot justly promote any man's religious reputatic
unless he *suffer for righteousness' sake.* The thi
at the bar of justice, and the seditious person in l
banishment, derive no credit from persecution. R
straint on the propagation of pernicious principl
or chastisement for irregularity of conduct, and hab
of insubordination, is not persecution; it is law
correction. Instead of establishing, therefore, t
reputation of sanctity, it only exposes the disorde
sufferer, and adds disgrace to his just punishme
So that, upon the whole, notwithstanding a dispo
tion to magnify common sufferings into real persec
tion be the most decisive feature of the hypocri
there is nothing which, in fact, can be less servi
able to his cause. Nevertheless, we still percei
and shall perceive, the odious name of persecuti
affixed to the most salutary and necessary cauti
against ambiguous changes and mischievous intu
sion.

And as every effort in defence of our natio
church is branded with the name of bigotry, so t
most just and temperate remark upon the disor
of separatists, and their visionary schemes, is cl

racterised as *horrid persecution.* But our Lord was no persecutor, when he said of the ostentatious Pharisees—*These things they do, that they may be seen of men:* nor did his just reproof of their hypocrisy, and perversion of the Scripture, in the smallest degree advance their claim to the reputation of holiness.

The ministers of Christ are not, therefore, to be deterred, by this abuse of the term *persecution,* from the vindication of just discipline, or from declaring the *reproofs* and the *threats,* as well as the *promises,* of the Gospel.

That spurious liberality which is indifferent to truth and error—that pretended candour which aims to extinguish our zeal and to blind our judgment—in vain obtrudes upon us, under the name of *Christian charity.* It is not the thing it pretends to be. It is not consistent with it: for it obstructs that greatest effort of charity—seasonable reproof, and evangelical admonition.

DISCOURSE VIII.

OF THE SIN OF SEPARATION.

1 COR. XII. 25.

That there should be no schism in the body.

IN the present age, a general sentiment seems to prevail, that Christianity allows every man *to walk after the imagination of his own heart*, and to do *what is right in his own eyes*. As a natural consequence of such a mode of thinking, every attempt to expose the folly and danger of departing from the straight rule of the Gospel is censured as *rash* and *illiberal judgment*. And, for the purpose of enforcing this censure, has often been repeated that question of the apostle—*Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.*

That all rash and uncharitable judgment is expressly forbidden; and that whoever goes beyond what is written, in censuring the conduct of his brethren, and pronounces a sentence of condemnation by the weight of his private opinion, or a conceit of his own self-sufficiency; is chargeable with a great offence: these are truths which no sincere and well-informed Christian can deny.

But widely different from this is that duty which is incumbent upon every faithful minister of the Gospel, to open the book of sacred records, and truly and impartially to report such cases as have been already adjudged and determined; and also to warn every professor of Christ's religion, that the authority of this book will be recognised in the supreme court—in that great day *when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.*

In this book, then, it is plainly laid down and declared, that the church of Christ, upon earth, was established in perfect unity of *fellowship*, of *faith*, and *doctrine*, guarded by a wholesome *law of discipline*, and placed under the care and superintendance of a duly-constituted ministry, which derived its appointment and authority through Christ, from God the Father of all.

And, to those who acknowledge the New Testament as the rule of their faith—as that code which unfolds the foundation of their hopes, and the terms of their responsibility—I would recommend, as a subject of serious and necessary consideration, the manner in which the apostles of Christ spoke of those who should introduce *divisions* and *heresies*, prejudicial to that unity.

St. Paul thus pathetically exhorts the Corinthians to avoid the first tendency towards a diversity of judgment in the church:—*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment: for*

it hath been declared unto me, of you, my brethren, that there are contentions among you.—DIVISIONS and CONTENTIONS!—How far had they proceeded; and what effect had they produced? Had they gone beyond what is deemed, in our age, the lawful exercise of private judgment?

Let us hear.—*Now this I say, that every one of you saith—I am of Paul; and I, of Apollos; and I, of Cephas; and, I, of Christ.* The ministers here mentioned, *Paul*, *Apollos*, and *Cephas*, were all duly-appointed, sound teachers, equally authorised to instruct the church. It might, therefore, be thought—and were Christianity a scheme of human device, and subject to the controul of variable opinion, it might be thought *with truth*—that a predilection in favour of either of these ministers must have been the most innocent exertion of private judgment: but how does the apostle argue upon the case?—*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you; or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* (1 Cor. x. 12.) Which is as much as if he had said—"*It is required of Christians to hear the Gospel with simplicity and singleness of heart; not to enrol themselves under the names of their favourite teachers, and to set up the ministry of the one in opposition to that of the other.*"

For this partiality he censures as evil, and as leading to an evil, still greater, the *disuniting* of the body of Christ. In another place, therefore, he expresses himself on this subject more fully and emphatically;—*I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it; for there must also be*

HERESIES *among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19.)

Surely a partiality, however undue, to the ministry of some one of those apostolical teachers who were *earnestly striving together for the uncorrupted faith of the Gospel,* was far from amounting to the crime of *heresy.* But the apostle justly regards the indulgence of this partiality as taking the first step in the road to heresy; as following the unsteady light of a separate judgment, that *abomination of desolation,* which, through the thorny path of fruitless dispute, and uncharitable contention, leads the unsteafly mind, from the narrow way of salvation, into the wilderness of heresy and delusion. This was, then, one of those *offences,* or *stumbling-blocks,* of which our Lord had forewarned his disciples, declaring to them—*It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe to him through whom they come.* (Luke xvii. 1.)

Of the pernicious tendency of such predilections we have many examples in the modern history of Christianity. Thus *Wesley* and *Whitfield* were pious ministers of our apostolical church. By uniting in a common cause with their brethren, they might have been useful to the edification of that church. But an intemperate, though honest, zeal, led them into some irregularities in the work of their ministry. Their exertions made them popular; and that popularity produced a *sect.* Abandoning the unerring rule of the Gospel, for the guidance of private judgment, they disagreed upon certain points of doctrine. Each was followed by his party, and the *sect* was again *divided.* This wild vine, planted in the soil of

self-conceit, has, in the space of four-score years, become luxuriant and spreading. How many separate branches it may have put forth, before the present day, it would be tedious to enquire. But some of them exhibit a total alienation from the parent church; and there are those amongst its cultivators who avow the design of overshadowing its growth and supplanting it altogether.

Against those who proceed thus far in the road to heresy, and cause actual separation from the mystical body, the same apostle warns the elders of the church: —*Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*— hath visibly invested you with the sacred charge—*to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know that, after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also,* OF YOURSELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, *speaking perverse things,* TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM. (Acts xx. 30.)

And, as the disciples of these perverse teachers are *drawn away after them,* and therefore separated from the unity of the church: so, on the other hand, the discipline of the church would not admit of fellowship with them. For it is an apostolical injunction—*Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them.* (Rom. xvi. 17.)

And to the church of the Thessalonians this charge is given:—*We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not*

after the tradition that ye received of us; for yourselves know how ye ought to follow us. And again: —*If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* (2 Thes. iii. 6, 7—14.)

From these last words it appears, that in the days of the apostle insubordination had not proceeded to that height of effrontery as to exult in the number of its votaries. A removal from the fellowship of the church was matter of *shame*, even to the disorderly and contumacious.

In the apostolical writings, no subject occurs more frequently than the reproof of those self-constituted teachers, who introduce schism and disorder into the flock of Christ. Thus, as the term *apostle* implies one who is duly authorised to carry the mandates and execute the commission of his superior, so St. Paul characterises those irregular teachers who, without such authority, intruded into the ministry by the name of *false apostles*, or men falsely pretending to a divine commission. Some of these had sought occasion to blame the regular ministers of Christ, alledging particularly against them, that they taught the Gospel for gain, and urging, as a specious contrast, the disinterestedness of their own labours. Now, though it was a Christian maxim, that *those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel;* yet, from receiving that support to which the ministry had a lawful title St. Paul resolutely abstains, declaring—*What I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are* FALSE

APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, *transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*—taking upon themselves the office of self-constituted teachers.—*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing, if* HIS MINISTERS *also be transformed, as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.* (2 Cor. xi. 12—15.)

Here it is to be observed, that these *false teachers* and importers of schism appear externally as real ministers of the Gospel, only they want an authentic appointment; and, instead of being lawfully invested with their office, they only *transform themselves into the apostles of Christ;* and, however their voice may sound like preachers of righteousness, whilst they come with this spurious commission, St. Paul hesitates not in styling them *ministers of Satan.* Abating their presumption and self-sufficiency, these men may have had upright intentions; but they introduced such disorder and division, as must eventually promote the cause of the great adversary.

Nor were such characters to be confined to the times in which the Gospel was first propagated. For the same apostle, speaking of the *latter days* of Christianity, prophetically declares—*The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts*—or vain conceits—*shall they* HEAP *to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* (2 Tim. iv.) Can a question remain in our days, whether this was a true prediction or not; whether it has been fulfilled;

or where such teachers and their disciples are to be found amongst the nominal professors of religion?

In the same manner the other apostles speak of those who should depart from the purity of the faith, and the unity of the church of Christ.

Thus St. Peter:—*But there were false prophets among the people*—of Israel—*even as there shall be* FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, *who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.* (2 Pet. ii. 1.)

Amongst professors of Christianity this must surely be deemed a most extraordinary heresy! But it was requisite that the apostolical prediction should be fulfilled: and St. Peter is found to have been a true prophet. Our own times furnish examples of men who name themselves after the name of Christ; yet disallow the Gospel account of our Lord's person and character, and deny the atonement which he made for the sins of mankind.

St. John says of the *antichristian teachers*, who were to characterise the last time—*They went out from us*—they separated themselves from the apostolical church—*but they were not of us*—previous to their going out, they were not real and true, but only nominal members of the church—*for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* (1 John ii. 19.)

And, again, he forbids the church to countenance any teachers who should corrupt the doctrines of the Gospel:—*If there come any unto you, and*

bring not THIS DOCTRINE, *receive him not into your houses, neither bid him,* "*God speed.*" (2 John 10.)

Of those *murmurers* and *complainers*, who should introduce schism and disorder in the latter ages of Christianity, St. Jude thus reminds the members of the church:—*But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.—These be they who separate themselves; sensual, not having the spirit.* Jude, 17—19.

Of the teachers of these disorderly separatists, the apostle says:—*Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain*—they have, first of all, envied, and then devised evil against their brethren—*and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward*—multiplied their unhallowed altars, and wandered from place to place, to hear *what the Lord will say to them there*, whilst they watch an opportunity to overthrow his church—*and have perished in the gainsaying of Corè.* (V. 11.)

But how can the example of Corè apply, as the apostle expressly does apply it, to those professed teachers of the Gospel who separate themselves from the apostolical church?

In order to answer this question, let us consider the crime of this man, and its punishment. Corè and his company murmured against that ministry which God had authorised by a visible and special appointment; they accused this ministry of priest-craft and corruption, and thus excited a schism in

the church of Israel:—*They gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them—Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation of the Lord are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?* Upon this plea of *general sanctity* and *private inspiration*, they began to assume to themselves the office of the priesthood, and took up their censers to offer incense.

Such was their crime: but though multitudes esteemed them in a peculiar manner as *the people of the Lord*, there was wrath upon them, and they perished from among the congregation. Their act, like the united efforts of our present sectaries, had an external shew *of resisting the undue influence of the established ministry*, of *promoting the cause of religious freedom*, and *advancing the glory of God;* but it was *an act of rebellion against the divine decrees;* it was *a direct violation of sacred and constituted order;* it was an impious presumption, to espouse the cause of God in opposition to the authority of his declared laws; and, therefore, it was visited with the penalty of disobedience. The decrees of God are not yet cancelled: for the apostle views the conduct of those self-constituted ministers of the Gospel—those *murmurers* and *complainers* who should appear in the last time—those that *separate themselves* from the one evangelical church—as exactly parallel with the gainsaying of Corè. He also declares, that a similar punishment awaits them. This will come to pass, perhaps, in the present

world; if not, most assuredly in that which is to come; for *the Scripture cannot be broken.*

Such is the manner in which the apostles of Christ speak of those who introduce disorder, and divisions, and heresies, prejudicial to the unity and harmony of the church. In handling this weighty subject, upon the present and upon former occasions, I have, as much as possible, confined myself to the express declarations of those apostles, and to such reflections as necessarily arise from them. For it is not any opinion of my own, or of fallible men like myself, that I strive to enforce. It is the unerring and unequivocal sentence of that Gospel which we all receive as the rule of our faith, and as the law by which we expect to be judged in the great day. And here we need not have recourse to a few texts of doubtful meaning, or difficult interpretation. The declarations of the apostles and evangelists upon this subject are plain, frequent, and consistent. They pervade the whole of their writings. And coming from the mouth of the Son of God, and from the suggestions of his Holy Spirit, they claim a place in our hearts paramount to all predilections of party, all prejudices of education, and all deductions of hypothetical reasoning: for if we build our hopes upon what is revealed from heaven, we must receive it as it is revealed. It is not the part of human wisdom to instruct the Holy Spirit of God. That Spirit has declared, that the separation of professed Christians from the one apostolical church is a grievous sin—is an act of perverse disobedience to the laws of the Gospel. And it must, therefore, be ob-

vious to every reflecting man, that such separation for causes merely trivial and circumstantial, not having the plea of necessity in its favour, has less hope of being pardoned in consideration of human infirmity.

Far be it, however, from me to determine to what degree God will punish this daring and mischievous sin; or to what extent the divine goodness will have compassion on the weakness, the errors, and the perverseness of men. It is not my province to judge; but it is my duty to declare to all men, that the words which our Lord and his apostles have spoken, will judge them in the last day—that the promises of the Gospel are exclusively directed to the *faithful*, the *obedient*, and the *charitable members of one undivided church;* and that those professors who lightly separate themselves from this church, and yet hope for salvation, must hope without promise and without Scripture.

That the divine laws are founded in right reason is a most certain truth, though we are not always competent to judge of their reasonableness. But of the fitness of that law which enjoins the unity of the apostolical church we may form an accurate idea, if we only consider the pernicious effects which needless separation, and a persuasion of its lawfulness, produce upon society in general.

In the first place, it gives the conceited, the self-willed, and insubordinate, an opportunity of framing trivial and imaginary objections to the faith, the forms, and the discipline of the church; and thus of breaking asunder the universal bond of charity, under the illusive pretence of *tender conscience*.

When this principle, spurious and fantastical as we generally find it, is allowed to operate freely, it unhinges every sacred obligation, and reduces the beautiful fabric of Christianity to a heap of rubbish and confusion. What is essential in religion must no longer be enforced according to the rule of God's word, and the model of the primitive church: what is circumstantial and indifferent must not be fixed by lawful authority, adjusted by the rules of good order, and directed to general edification. All must submit to the fancy of the individual; to the effrontery of self-conceit, under the assumed name of *tender conscience.* And as men, when they make their separate notions and surmises the rule of judging, must be variously determined in their opinions, it is evident that, under the influence of this vague mode of thinking, neither unity nor uniformity can prevail.

A very little acquaintance with the present state of religion may convince any man, that a great variety of sects and denominations, and amongst them abundance of opposition, detraction, bitterness, and unchristian censure, not to mention dangerous and pernicious errors, have sprung from this source, to the prejudice of that charitable and benevolent spirit which is essential to the disciples of Christ. For the conscience which is *unduly tender* on the side of its possessor, is generally found rough and callous when it comes into contact with his neighbour.

Again: the bulk of mankind, who seldom think deeply, observing such divisions and dissensions amongst nominal professors of Christianity, are led

to imagine that so many sects of the same religion are, in reality, so many distinct religions; and that, as the members of each of these sects are equally tolerated and protected in society, one religion must be as good as another; that they all conduct their votaries to the same place; and, consequently, that it is perfectly immaterial to which of them they attach themselves, or how long they deliberate before they have determined in their choice.

Hence the progress is easy to a secret surmise, that, if all religions are equal amongst themselves, an adherence to the form of either of them cannot be matter of any great moment; that, as the right of private judgment operates so freely, a man may shape his religion agreably to his own ideas, as well as in conformity with the opinions and practice of any body of men; that if he only take heed to support in the world a decent deportment, and *serve God in his own way*, he shall be perfectly safe, however singular in his system of devotion.

But, to *his own way* he naturally adds *at his own leisure*. The great work is continually put off to a more convenient season, and the convenient season never comes. This is, indeed, an indulgence beyond the permission of our laws. The act of toleration has not conceded, even to *tender consciences*, the *infidel liberty* of contemning every form of devotion; but as the lapse of error is rapid upon the declivity of private judgment, this liberty has been claimed upon principle in its fullest extent. One of the most eminent separatists of our age having laid it down as a maxim, *that the state has no right to enquire what religion*

he chooses to profess, confidently adds—*Or whether I choose to have any religion at all.* And it is notorious that, in compliance with the assumption of private judgment, that law of the state which enjoins regular attendance at some place of public worship, is seldom, or never enforced.

It is, then, evident, that the laxity of sentiment which countenances unlimited separation, dissolves all the powers of wholesome discipline. Even personal admonition may be rejected with pride and sullenness, upon a presumption of civil impunity, or of religious liberty: for whilst a general opinion of the lawfulness of separation prevails, every man regards his union with the national church, or with any other body of professors, as matter of choice, and that choice as a thing in itself wholly indifferent.

Hence, if a member of the established church is reproved for any irregularity of conduct, or if he encounter the slightest inconvenience or want of accommodation, he withdraws from the society of his brethren, and joins some separate sect; if he cannot submit to the rules of this order, he goes to another; and if his notions and conduct cannot be duly accommodated in any sect, already formed, there is an obvious expedient, to found a new sect of his own, or to subside in the solitary meditation of a *quietist*. And all this while he continues to avow the profession of Christianity, and even retains the hope of salvation through Christ.

Such disorders are produced amongst those who have some remaining sense of moral responsibility, and some regard to their condition in a future state.

But these are not the only evils consequent upon an unbridled laxity of principle and discipline. To this laxity we must, in a great measure, ascribe the profane licentiousness of thousands in our land, who live without hope and without God in the world. To this we must ascribe the pernicious vices and horrid crimes by which they are disgraced in this world, and the misery they are doomed to suffer in the world to come. A mistaken candour, a spurious liberality, have set them at liberty from all salutary controul in the period of their youth. Because the opinions and conduct of men are free, the church could not effectually claim them as her children, and subject them to a religious education. It was not the choice of their parents to bring them regularly into the assembly of the faithful, and their choice could not be compelled. Irreligion is the patrimony of the family; and the general abuse which has grown out of the lenient spirit of toleration, leaves the children in quiet possession of their inheritance. They have no invariable rule of faith impressed upon their infant minds, no sacred laws which demand obedience, no discipline which may restrain the conduct of men under religious sanctions. In all these particulars, toleration admits of diversity and dispensation; and custom, which perverts the spirit of toleration, connives at their total dereliction.

Thus multitudes grow up in ignorance and profaneness. Beholding religion only at a distance, and remarking the discord and variety of its nominal professors, they rashly conclude that religion itself

is nothing more than a solemn delusion or weak affectation, and treat it with absolute neglect.

Thus the tolerant laws of our land, which, if properly understood, go no farther than to renounce persecution—to suspend temporal penalties, without abrogating or altering the decrees of the Gospel—are made in the opinion of the multitude, the great rule of faith and practice. That multitude seldom reflects that no man can be admitted into heaven by the operation of human laws; and, in consequence of this woeful inattention, the Holy Scriptures, which, alone, are sufficient for salvation, are either overlooked or perverted—those Scriptures which teach us that the church of Christ is *one undivided body*, and enjoin *that there should be no schism in that body, but that all the members should have the same care one for another.*

EXTRACTS

FROM

ARCHBISHOP WAKE'S

APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

ST. CLEMENT'S EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

IT will behove us, to take care that, looking into the depths of the divine knowledge, we do all things in order, whatsoever our Lord has commanded us to do. *And particularly*, that we perform our offerings and service to *God*, at their appointed seasons: for these he has commanded to be done, not rashly and disorderly, but at certain determinate times, and hours. And therefore he has ordained, by his supreme will and authority, both where, and by what persons they are to be performed: that so, all things being piously done unto all well-pleasing, they may be acceptable unto him. They therefore, who make their offerings at the appointed seasons, are happy, and accepted: because that, obeying the commandments of the Lord, they are free from sin. And the same care must be had of the persons that minister unto him. For the chief priest has his proper services; and, to the priests, their proper place is appointed; and, to the Levites, appertain their proper ministers; and the layman is

confined within the bounds of what is commanded to laymen.

Let every one of you, *therefore*, brethren, bless God in his proper station, with a good conscience, and with all gravity, not exceeding the rule of his service, that is appointed to him. The daily sacrifices are not offered every where; nor the peace offerings, nor the sacrifices appointed for sins and transgressions; but only at Jerusalem, nor in any place there, but only at the altar, before the temple; that which is offered, being first diligently examined by the high-priest and the other ministers, we before mentioned. They therefore who do any thing, which is not agreable to his will, are punished with death. Consider, brethren, that, by how much the better knowledge God has vouchsafed unto us, by so much the greater danger are we exposed to.

The apostles have preached to us, from our Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ from God. Christ therefore was sent by God, the apostles by Christ; so both were orderly sent, according to the will of God. For, having received their command, and being thoroughly assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and convinced by the word of God, with the fulness of the Holy Spirit, they went abroad, publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus, preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions, to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the spirit. Nor was this any new thing: seeing that, long before, it was written concerning bishops and deacons.

For thus saith the Scripture, in a certain place; I will appoint their overseers in righteousness, and their ministers in faith.

And what wonder if they, to whom such a work was committed by God, in Christ, established such officers as we before mentioned; when even that blessed and faithful servant, in all his house, Moses, set down in the holy Scriptures, all that were commanded him.—Whom also all the rest of the prophets followed, bearing witness, with one consent to those things that were appointed by him. For he, perceiving an emulation to arise, among the tribes, concerning the priesthood, and that there was a strife about it, which of them should be adorned with that glorious name,—commanded their twelve captains to bring him twelve rods, every tribe being written upon its rod, according to its name. And he took them and bound them together, and sealed them with the seals of the twelve princes of the tribes, and laid them up in the tabernacle of witness, upon the table of God. And when he had shut the door of the tabernable, he sealed up the keys of it, in like manner as he had done the rods,—and said unto them, men and brethren, whichsoever tribe shall have its rod blossom, that tribe has God chosen to perform the office of a priest, and to minister unto him in holy things. And when the morning was come, he called together all Israel, six hundred thousand men; and shewed, to their princes, the seals; and opened the tabernacle of witness, and brought forth the rods. And the rod of Aaron was found not only to have blossomed, but also to have fruit upon

it. What think you, beloved? Did not Moses before know what should happen? Yes verily: but, to the end there might be no division, nor tumult in Israel, he did in this manner, that the name of the true and only God might be glorified: to him be honour for ever and ever. Amen.

So likewise our apostles knew, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there should contentions arise, upon the account of the ministry. And therefore, having a perfect fore-knowledge of this, they appointed persons, as we have before said, and then gave direction, how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry. Wherefore, we cannot think that those may justly be thrown out of their ministry, who were either appointed by them, or afterwards chosen by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church; and who have, with all lowliness and innocency, ministered, to the flock of Christ, in peace, and without self interest, and were, for a long time, commended by all. For it would be no small *sin* in us, should we cast off those, from their ministry, who holily and without blame, fulfil the duties of *it*. Blessed are those priests, who, having finished *their* course, before these times, have obtained a fruitful and perfect dissolution; for they have no fear, lest any one should turn them out of the place, which is now appointed for them. But we see how you have put out some, who lived reputably among you from the ministry, which, by their innocence, they have adorned.

Ye are contentious, brethren, and zealous for

ngs that pertain not unto salvation. Look into
holy Scriptures, which are the true words of
Holy Ghost. Ye know that there is nothing
just or counterfeit written in them. There you
ll not find that righteous men were ever cast off
such as were good themselves. They were per-
cuted, it is true; but it was by the wicked and un-
t. They were cast into prison; but they were
t in by those that were unholy. They were
ned; but it was by transgressors. They were
led; but by accursed men, and such as had taken
an unjust envy against them. And all these
ings they underwent gloriously. For what shall
say brethren? Was Daniel cast into the den of
ns, by men fearing God? Ananias, Azarias, and
isael, were they cast into the fiery furnace, by men
ofessing the excellent and glorious worship of the
lost High? God forbid! What kind of persons then
ere they that did these things? They were men
ominable, full of all wickedness; who were in-
nsed, to so great a degree, as to bring those into
fferings, who, with a holy and unblamable purpose
mind worshipped God: not knowing that the
lost High is the protector and defender of all such
, with a pure conscience, serve his holy name: to
hom be glory for ever and ever; Amen. But they
ho, with a full persuasion, have endured these
ings, are made partakers of glory and honour: and
re exalted and lifted up, by God, in their memorial,
roughout all ages. Amen.

Wherefore it will behove us also brethren, to fol-
w such examples as these; for it is written, "hold

" fast to such as are holy; for they that do [illegible]
" shall be sanctified." And again, in another place, he saith, " with the pure thou shalt be pure, and " with the elect thou shalt be elect, but with the " perverse man thou shalt be perverse." Let us therefore join ourselves to the innocent and righteous; for such are the elect of God. Wherefore, are those strifes, and anger, and divisions, and schisms, and wars, among us? Have we not all one God and one Christ? Is not one spirit of grace poured out upon us all? Have we not one calling in Christ? Why then do we rent and tear in pieces the members of Christ; and raise seditions against our own body? And are come to such a height of madness as to forget that we were members one of another? Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, " Wo to that man, by whom offences " come. It were better for him that he had never " been born, than that he should have offended one " of my elect. It were better for him, that a mill- " stone should be tied about his neck, and he should " be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one " of my little ones." Your schism has perverted many, has discouraged many: it has caused diffidence in many, and grief in us all. And yet your sedition continues still.

Take the epistle of the blessed Paul, the Apostle, into your hands; what was it that he wrote to you, at his first preaching the Gospel among you? Verily he did, by the spirit, admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then, ye had begun to fall into parties, and factions

among yourselves. Nevertheless your partiality then led you into a much less sin: forasmuch as ye placed your affections upon Apostles, men of eminent reputation in the church; and upon another, who was greatly tried and approved of by them. But consider, we pray you, who are they that have now led you astray, and lessened the reputation of that brotherly love, that was so eminent among you? It is a shame, my beloved, yea a very great shame, and unworthy of your christian profession to hear, that the most firm and ancient church of the Corinthians should, by one or two persons, be led into a sedition against its priests. And this report is come, not only to us, but to those also that differ from us. Insomuch that the name of the Lord is blasphemed through your folly; and even ye yourselves are brought into danger by it.

Let us therefore, with all haste, put an end to this sedition! and let us fall down before the Lord, and beseech him, with tears, that he would be favourably reconciled to us, and restore us again to a seemly and holy course of brotherly love. For this is the gate of righteousness, opening unto life: as it is written, "open unto me the gates of righ-'teousness; I will go in unto them and will praise 'the Lord, this is the gate of the Lord, the righ-'teous shall enter into it." Although therefore many gates are opened, yet this gate of righteousness is that gate in Christ, at which blessed are all they that enter in, and direct their way in holiness and righteousness, doing all things without disorder. Let a man be faithful, let him be powerful in the

utterance of knowledge; let him be wise in making an exact judgment of words; let him be pure in all his actions: but still, by how much the more he seems to be above others, by reason of these *things*, by so much the more will it behove him to be humble-minded, and to seek what is profitable to all men, and not his own advantage.

He that has the love that is in Christ, let him keep the commandments of Christ. For who is able to express the obligation of the love of God? What man is sufficient to declare, as is fitting, the excellency of its beauty? The height to which charity leads, is inexpressible. Charity unites us to God: Charity covers the multitude of sins: Charity endures all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base and sordid in charity. Charity lifts not itself up above others; admits of no divisions; is not seditious; but does all things in peace and concord. By charity were all the elect of God made perfect: without it nothing is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. Through charity did the Lord join us unto himself; whilst, for the love that he bore towards us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his own blood for us, by the will of God; his flesh, for our flesh, his soul, for our souls.

Ye see, beloved, how great and wonderful a thing charity is; and how that no expressions are sufficient to declare its perfection. But, who is fit to be found in it? Even such only as God shall vouchsafe to make so. Let us therefore pray to him, and beseech him, that we may be worthy of it; that so we may live in charity, being unblamable, without human

propensities, without respect of persons. All the ages of the world, from Adam, even unto this day, are passed away: but they who have been made perfect in love, have, by the grace of God, obtained a place among the righteous; and shall be made manifest in the judgment of the kingdom of Christ. For it is written, "enter into thy chambers for a "little space, till my anger and indignation shall "pass away: and I will remember the good day, "and will raise you up out of your graves." Happy then shall we be, beloved, if we shall have fulfilled the commandments of God, in the unity of love; that so, through love, our sins may be forgiven us. For so it is written, "blessed are they whose ini-"quities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no "sin, and in whose mouth there is no guile." Now this blessing is fulfilled in those who are chosen by God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us therefore, as many as have transgressed by any of the suggestions of the adversary, beg God's forgiveness. And, as for those who have been the heads of the sedition and faction among you, let them look to the common end of our hope. For, as many as are endued with fear and charity, would rather they themselves should fall into trials than their neighbours; and chuse to be themselves condemned, rather than that the good and just charity delivered to us, should suffer. For it is seemly for a man to confess, wherein he has transgressed; and not to harden his heart, as the hearts of those were hardened,

who raised up sedition against Moses the servant of God; whose punishment was manifest unto all men; for they went down alive into the grave. Pharaoh and his host, and all the rulers of Egypt, their chariots also and their horsemen, were, for no other cause, drowned in the bottom of the Red Sea, and perished; but because they hardened their foolish hearts, after so many signs done in the land of Egypt, by Moses, the servant of God.

ST. IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

I HAVE heard of your name much beloved in God; which ye have very justly attained by a habit of righteousness, according to the faith and love which is in Jesus Christ our Saviour: how that, being followers of God and stirring up yourselves by the blood of Christ, ye have perfectly accomplished the work that was connatural unto you. For, hearing that I came bound from Syria, for the common name and hope, trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome; that so, by suffering I may become indeed the disciple of him, who gave himself to God an offering and sacrifice for us, ye hastened to see me, I received therefore, in the name of God, your whole multitude in Onesimus; who, by inexpressible love, is our's, but, according to the flesh, is your Bishop: whom I beseech you, by Jesus Christ, to love; and that you should all strive to be like unto him. And blessed be God, who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, to enjoy such an excellent bishop.

For what concerns my fellow servant Burrhus, and your most blessed deacon, in things pertaining

to God; I intreat you that he may tarry longer, both for your's and your bishop's honour. And Crocus, also worthy both our God and you, whom I have received, as the pattern of your love, has, in all things, refreshed me, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ shall also refresh him; together with Onesimus, and Burrhus, and Euplus, and Fronto, in whom I have, as to your charity, seen all of you. And may I always have joy of you, if I shall be worthy of it. It is therefore fitting that you should, by all means, glorify Jesus Christ, who hath glorified you: that, by an uniform obedience, ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; and may all speak the same things concerning every thing; and that, being subject to your bishop, and the presbytery, ye may be wholly and thoroughly sanctified.

These *things* I prescribe to you, not as if I were somebody extraordinary: for, though I am bound for his name, I am not yet perfect in Christ Jesus. But now I begin to learn, and I speak to you as fellow disciples together with me. For I ought to have been stirred up by you, in faith, in admonition, in patience, in long-suffering: but, for as much as charity suffers me not to be silent towards you, I have first taken upon me to exhort you, that ye would all run together, according to the will of God. For, even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is sent by the will of the Father; as the bishops, appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth, are, by the will of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it will become you to run together, according to the will of your

bishop, as also ye do! For your famous presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop, as the strings are to the harp. Therefore in your concord, and agreeing charity, Jesus Christ is sung; and every single person among you makes up the chorus: that so, being all consonant in love, and taking up the song of God, ye may, in a perfect unity, with one voice, sing to the Father by Jesus Christ; to the end that he may both hear you, and perceive by your works, that ye are indeed the members of his Son; wherefore it is profitable for you to live in an unblamable unity, that so ye may always have a fellowship with God.

For, if I, in this little time, have had such a familiarity with your bishop, I mean not a carnal, but spiritual acquaintance with him, how much more must I think you happy, who are so joined to him, as the church is to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father; that so all things may agree in the same unity: let no man deceive himself, if a man be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. For, if the prayer of one or two be of so much force, as we are told; how much more powerful shall that of the bishop and the whole church be? He therefore that does not come together, into the same place *with it*, is proud, and has already condemned himself. For it is written, "God resisteth the proud." Let us take heed therefore, that we do not set ourselves against the bishop, that we may be subject to God.

The more any one sees his bishop silent, the more let him revere him. For, whomsoever the

master of the house sends to be over his own household, we ought, in like manner, to receive him, as we would do him that sent him. It is therefore evident that we ought to look upon the bishop, even as we would do upon the Lord himself. And indeed *Onesimus* himself does greatly commend your good order in God: that you all live according to the truth, and that no heresy dwells among you. For neither do ye hearken to any one more than to Jesus Christ speaking to you in truth.

For some there are who carry about the name of Christ in deceitfulness, but do things unworthy of God; whom ye must flee, as ye would do, so many wild beasts. For they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly: against whom ye must guard yourselves, as men hardly to be cured. There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual; made and not made; God, incarnate; true life in death; both of Mary and of God: first passable, then impassable; even Jesus Christ our Lord.

ST. IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE

TO THE

MAGNESIANS.

WHEN I heard of your well-ordered love and charity in God, being full of joy, I desired much to speak unto you in the faith of Jesus Christ. For, having been thought worthy to obtain a most excellent name, in the bonds which I carry about, I salute the churches, wishing in them an union both of the body and spirit of Jesus Christ, our eternal life; as also of faith and charity, to which nothing is preferred: but especially of Jesus and the Father, in whom, if we undergo all the injuries of the prince of this present world, and escape, we shall enjoy God.

Seeing then I have been judged worthy to see you, by Damas, your most excellent bishop; and by your very worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and by my fellow-servant Socio the deacon, in whom I rejoice, forasmuch as he is subject unto his bishop, as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery, as to the law of Jesus Christ, I determined to write unto you.

Wherefore, it will become you also not to use your bishop too familiarly upon the account of his

youth; but to yield all reverence to him, according to the power of God the Father: as also I perceive that your holy presbyters do; not considering his age, which indeed, to appearance, is young; but as becomes those who are prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all. It will, therefore, behove you, with all sincerity, to obey your bishop in honour of him whose pleasure it is that ye should do so. Because he that does not do so deceives not the bishop whom he sees, but affronts him that is invisible. For whatsoever of this kind is done, it reflects not upon man, but upon God, who knows the secrets of our hearts.

It is therefore fitting, that we should not only be called Christians, but be so. As some call indeed their governor, bishop; but yet do all things without him. But I can never think that such as these have a good conscience, seeing that they are not gathered together thoroughly according to God's commandment.

Seeing then *all* things have an end, there are these two indifferently set before us, death and life; and every one shall depart unto his proper place. For, as there are two sorts of coins, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of these has its proper inscription engraven upon it, so also is it here. The unbelievers are of this world; but the faithful, through charity, have the character of God the Father, by Jesus Christ; by whom, if we are not readily disposed to die after the likeness of his passion, his life is not in us.

Forasmuch, therefore, as I have, in the persons beforementioned, seen all of you in faith and charity, I exhort you, that you study to do all things in a divine concord; your bishop presiding in the place of God; your presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles; and your deacons most dear to me, being intrusted in the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before all ages, and appeared in the end to us. Wherefore, taking the same holy course, see that ye all reverence one another; and let no one look upon his neighbour after the flesh, but do ye all mutually love each other in Jesus Christ. Let there be nothing that may be able to make a division among you; but be ye united to your bishop, and those who preside over you, to be your pattern and direction in the way to immortality.

As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to him, neither by himself, nor yet by his apostles, so neither do ye do any thing without your bishop and presbyters; neither endeavour to let any thing appear rational to yourselves apart; but being come together into the same place, have one common prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope; in charity, and in joy undefiled. There is one Lord Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is better. Wherefore come ye all together as unto one temple of God; as to one altar; as to one Jesus Christ, who, proceeding from one Father, and exists in one, and is returned to one.

ST. IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE

TO THE

TRALLIANS.

I HAVE heard of your blameless and constant disposition through patience, which not only appears in your outward conversation, but is naturally rooted and grounded in you: in like manner as Polybius your bishop has declared unto me, who came to me to Smyrna, by the will of God and Jesus Christ; and so rejoiced together with me in my bonds for Jesus Christ, that, in effect, I saw your whole church in him. Having therefore received the testimony of your good will towards me for God's sake by him, I seemed to find you, as also I knew that ye were, the followers of God.

For, whereas ye are subject to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live, not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, that so believing in his death, ye might escape death. It is therefore necessary that as ye do, so without your bishop, you should do, nothing; also be ye subject to your presbyters, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope; in whom if we walk, we shall be found in him. The deacons also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus

Christ, must, by all means, please all. For they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God. Wherefore they must avoid all offences, as they would do fire.

In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ; and the bishop as the Father; and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God and college of the apostles. Without these there is no church: concerning all which I am persuaded that ye think after the very same manner; for I have received, and even now have with me, the pattern of your love in your bishop; whose every look is instructive, and whose mildness powerful; whom I am persuaded the very atheists themselves cannot but reverence. But because I have a love towards you, I will not write any more sharply unto you about this matter, though I very well might; but now I have done so, lest, being a condemned man, I should seem to prescribe to you as an apostle.

I have great knowledge in God; but I refrain myself, lest I should perish in my boasting. For now I ought the more to fear, and not hearken to those that would puff me up. For they that speak to me in my praise chasten me. For I indeed desire to suffer, but I cannot tell whether I am worthy so to do. And this desire, though to others it does not appear, yet to myself it is, for that very reason, the more violent. I have therefore need of moderation, by which the prince of this world is destroyed.

Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things? But I fear lest I should harm you, who are

yet but babes in Christ: (excuse me this care;) and lest perchance, being not able to receive them, ye should be choaked with them. For even I myself, although I am in bonds, yet am not therefore unable to understand heavenly things: as the places of the angels, and the several companies of them, under their respective princes; things visible and invisible; but in these I am yet a learner. For many things are wanting to us that we come not short of God.

I exhort you therefore, or rather not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, that ye use none but Christian nourishment, abstaining from pasture which is of another kind, I mean heresy. For they that are heretics confound together the doctrine of Jesus Christ with their own poison, whilst they seem worthy of belief; as men give a deadly potion, mixed with sweet wine; which he who is ignorant of, does with the treacherous pleasure sweetly drink in his own death.

Wherefore guard yourselves against such persons. And that you will do if you are not puffed up; but continue inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from your bishop, and from the commands of the apostles. He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that is, that does any thing without the bishop and presbyters and deacons, is not pure in his conscience.

ST. IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE

TO THE

PHILADELPHIANS.

WHICH bishop, I know, obtained that great ministry among you, not of himself, neither of men, nor out of vain glory; but by the love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ: whose moderation I admire; who, by his silence, is able to do more than others with all their vain talk. For he is fitted to the command as the heart to its strings. Wherefore my soul esteems his mind towards God most happy, knowing it to be fruitful in all virtue and perfect; full of constancy, free from passion, and according to all the moderation of the living God.

Wherefore, as becomes the children both of the light and of truth, flee divisions and false doctrines; but where your shepherd is, there do ye, as sheep, follow after. For there are many wolves who seem worthy of belief, that with a false pleasure lead captive those that run in the course of God; but in your concord they shall find no place.

Abstain therefore from those evil herbs which Jesus Christ does not dress, because such are not the plantation of the Father. Not that I have found any division among you, but rather all man-

ner of purity. For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their bishop. And as many as shall, with repentance, return into the unity of the church, even these shall also be the servants of God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, brethren! If any one follows him that makes a schism in the church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If any one walks after any other opinion, he agrees not with the passion of Christ.

Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake all of the same holy eucharist. For there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of his blood; one altar; as also there is one bishop, together with his presbytery, and the deacons my fellow-servants; that so whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to the will of God.

I cried whilst I was among you; I spake with a loud voice; attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons! Now some supposed that I spake this, as foreseeing the division that should come among you. But he is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man. But the Spirit spake, saying on this wise; do nothing without the bishop: keep your bodies as the temple of God: love unity: flee divisions: be the followers of Christ, as he was of his Father.

I therefore did as became me, as a man composed to unity. For where there is division and wrath, God dwelleth not. But the Lord forgives all that repent, if they return to the unity of God, and to the council of the bishop.

ST. IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE

TO THE

SMYRNÆANS.

SEE that ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ, the Father; and the presbytery as the apostles. And reverence the deacons as the command of God. Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the church, separately from the bishop. Let that eucharist be looked upon as well established, which is either offered by the bishop, or by him to whom the bishop has given his consent. Wherefore the bishop shall appear, there let the people also be; as, where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not lawful, without the bishop, either to baptise or to celebrate the holy communion: but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing unto God; that so whatever is done, may be sure and well done.

For what remains, it is very reasonable that we should repent, whilst there is yet time to return unto God. It is a good thing to have a due regard both to God and to the bishop: he that honours the bishop shall be honoured of God. But he that does any thing without his knowledge, ministers unto the devil.

Lastly, St. Ignatius, in his Epistle to St. Polycarp, who was ordained "bishop of Smyrna by the apostles," (Introduction, page 53,) thus strongly exhorts him to maintain his authority as bishop. (Page 124.)

Maintain thy place, with all care both of flesh and spirit: make it thy endeavour to preserve unity, than which nothing is better.

And speaking, through Polycarp, to the church of Smyrna, he adds,

Hearken unto the bishop, that God may hearken unto you. My soul be security for them that submit to their bishop, with their presbyters and deacons. (Page 126.)

EMBER DAYS IN LENT

EXPLAINED FROM

NELSON'S COMPANION FOR THE FASTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Q. WHAT are Ember-Days?

A. Certain days set apart for consecrating to God, the four seasons of the year, and for the imploring of his blessings, by fasting and prayer, upon the ordinations, performed in the church, at such times. And this in conformity to the practice of the apostles, who, when they separated persons for the work of the ministry, prayed and fasted before they laid on their hands. It will become us, therefore, to address Heaven, at this time, after the same manner, that God would be pleased so to govern the minds of the bishops, that they may admit none into holy orders, but such as are duly qualified for the discharge of that sacred function, and that those, who shall be ordained to serve at the altar, may, by their exemplary lives and zealous labours, turn many unto righteousness.

Q. When are these ember-days observed in the church?

A. At the four seasons of the year, being the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, after the first Sun-

day in Lent, after Whitsunday, after the fourteenth of September, and after the thirteenth of December: It being enjoined, by a canon of the church, that deacons or ministers be ordained or made but only upon the Sundays immediately following these ember fasts.

Q. Why are these fasts called ember-days?

A. Some think they are so called from a German word that imports abstinence; others that they are derived from ember, which signifies ashes, and therefore are styled ember-days, because it was customary, among the ancients, to accompany their fastings with such humiliations, as were expressed by sprinkling ashes upon their heads, or sitting in them; and when they broke their fasts, upon such days, to eat only cakes baked upon embers, which was therefore called ember bread. But Dr. Maraschal's conjecture, in his observations upon the Saxon gospels, seems to hit upon the true etymology, which he derives from the Saxon word importing a circuit or course; so that these fasts, being not occasional, but returning every year in certain courses, may properly be said to be ember-days, because fasts in course.

Q. Wherein consists the piety of instituting these days?

A. The ordination of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of God's church, being of that vast importance to the welfare of it, as well as to the salvation of those souls that are members of that body, it is very necessary and fitting that all Christians, who are so much concerned in the conse-

quences of it, should use their best endeavours to make it successful and efficacious; which cannot be better done than by the united prayers and fastings of Christians, which have always been esteemed an admirable method to procure God's favour and blessing upon such occasions. Besides, the time of ordinations being publicly stated, the people have the advantage and liberty of making their objections, if they have any thing material to offer against the candidates for holy orders; a privilege which the ancient church always allowed, and is very much encouraged by the church of England, who gives free leave to every man to declare, if he knoweth any impediment or crime, in any persons presented to be ordained, and calls upon them to come forth and shew the crimes alledged.

Q. What officers are established in the Christian church?

A. The church being a regular society founded by Christ, distinct from, and independant of, all other worldly societies, must naturally make us suppose that he instituted some officers for the government of it. And it is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture, and ancient authors, that, from the apostles time, there hath been these orders of ministers in Christ's church, bishops, priests and deacons; which offices were evermore had in such reverent estimation, that no man, by his own private authority, might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried and examined and known to have such qualities as were re-

quisite for the same, and also by public prayers, with imposition of hands, approved and admitted thereunto. These orders have all some spiritual powers annexed to their office, though some in a greater degree, and others in a less.

Q. What is the office of a deacon?

A. "It pertaineth to the office of a deacon, in the church where he shall be appointed, to assist the priest in divine service, and especially when he ministereth the holy communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read the Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the congregation, and to instruct the youth in the catechism; to baptize and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the bishop. And furthermore it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the curate, that, by his exhortation, they may be relieved by the parish, or other convenient alms."

Q. Upon what occasion was this order instituted in the church?

A. This office had its original from the murmuring of the Grecians, who were probably proselytes, Jews by religion, and Gentiles by descent, against the Hebrews, who were Jews both by religion and descent. That their widows were neglected in the daily ministration, when believers had all things in common, and were supplied out of one treasury. To prevent any mismanagement for the future, the apostles appointed seven men of honest report, full

of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom to superintend the necessities of the poor and to serve tables, who were called deacons.

Q. Doth this serving of tables only imply the care of the poor?

A. Besides the care of the poor, by their serving of tables, was implied their peculiar attendance at the Lord's table. It being the custom of Christians, in those times, to meet every day at the Lord's table, where they made their offerings for the poor, and when poor and rich had their meals together; consequently it was their office to deliver the sacramental elements, when consecrated, to the people. They had also authority to preach and baptize, as appears from the example of Philip, one of the seven; but they all along, in the primitive church, retained so much of the chief design of their institution, that they took care of the church's revenues under the bishops, and distributed them as the bishop and his college of presbyters appointed.

Q. Was not this office exercised, as some pretend, by lay-men?

A. The solemnity that was used in setting deacons apart for this service, by prayer and imposition of hands, and the qualifications that St. Paul requires in a deacon, almost the very same with those for a priest, sufficiently prove this degree to be an ecclesiastical office; nor would the primitive church have forbidden deacons, as it certainly did, to have followed secular employments, if they had been mere lay-men,

Q. How long is it required that a person shall remain in the degree of a deacon?

A. It is enjoined by the church "That a deacon shall continue in that office for the space of a whole year at the least, (except for reasonable causes it be otherwise seen to his ordinary), to the intent he may be perfect and well expert in the things pertaining to the ecclesiastical administration: In executing whereof, if he be found faithful and diligent, he may be admitted, by his diocesan, to the order of priesthood."

And it is to be wished that this rule was more particularly observed, that those who aspire to the priesthood, might give sufficient proof of their fitness for that high calling.

Q. What qualifications are required in a deacon?

A. Chiefly that he be a man of a sober and godly conversation, edifying by his example those Christians where he officiates; and that he be endowed with such measures of learning, as to be able at least to render an account of his faith, in Latin, and confirm it with testimonies out of the holy Scripture: Especially he must be very conversant in those holy books, which are the perfect rule of faith, and manners, necessary for the governing of his own life; the instruction of others, and the confuting of gainsayers. The bishop ought to have a moral assurance, partly by his own knowledge, and partly by the testimonials of credible hands, that the person presented is so qualified; and his arch-deacon, after trial and examination, professes, that he believes the candidate so prepared.

Q. What do you mean by an arch-deacon?

A. In great churches, where the bishops had many deacons, one among them had the title of arch-deacon, who was a sort of governor over all the rest; to whom the bishop committed some authority to admonish and censure as it should be found expedient, still reserving an appeal to himself. The original jurisdiction, which of right belonged to the bishop, by degrees, and mutual consent, was in part committed to the arch-deacon, whose jurisdiction is founded on immemorial custom in subordination to the bishop; and though, for some time, he was only of the order of deacons, yet afterwards it became common for such as were priests to be chosen to that office, which consists in the inspecting the lives and behaviour of the clergy, and in taking care the churches and chancels be kept in good repair, and that the possessions, and all other things belonging to God's house, be not embezzled or damnified; particularly to try and examine those who shall be candidates for holy orders. The institution of arch-deacons is very antient, and their authority very considerable; and the due execution of the office contributes very much to the good government of the church.

Q. What is the office of a priest or presbyter?

A. To teach and instruct the people committed to his charge, by the bishop of the diocese, in the whole doctrine of christianity, as contained in the holy Scriptures. To administer the sacraments and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded. To oppose all such erroneous and strange

doctrines as are contrary to God's word. To use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within his cure, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given. To offer up the prayers in the public assemblies. To maintain quietness and peace and love among all Christian people, especially among those committed to his charge. To fashion and frame himself and family according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make himself and them examples to the flock he feeds. To exercise all these duties with diligence and fidelity, and to forsake and set aside (as much as may be) all worldly cares and studies; since the employment of his function is sufficient to engage all his time and all his thoughts. The sacerdotal powers none must undertake, but such as have received their commission from bishops, who only have authority to send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

Q. What qualifications are required in a priest, or minister of the Gospel, to enable him to discharge his duty?

A. A thorough knowledge of the whole will of God, since it is the priest's lips must preserve knowledge; and, except they have it themselves, how can they communicate it to others? Faithfulness in the instruction of those that are committed to their care, that they may deliver nothing for the will of God, but what is contained within the bounds of their commission, and that they may conceal nothing that is necessary for the people to believe and practise; and this, though it contradicts

the prejudices of some, and the corrupt and worldly maxims of others. For, by this particular application to the consciences of men, according to their wants and necessities, it will be plain they consult not so much what will please them, as what will do them good. Great prudence in all their conduct; which, though it will not permit them to neglect any part of their duty, yet it implies the performing it in such a manner as may render instructions and persuasions most effectual, by taking the most convenient seasons, and teaching things of present use, and by avoiding all unnecessary provocations. A faithful servant doth what he is commanded, and a wise servant doth it in the most effectual manner. But above all, exemplary holiness, which is necessary, not only for his own salvation, but to make all his endeavours for the salvation of others, effectual.

Q. What care hath the church of England taken, that unfit persons should not be admitted to holy orders?

A. Besides the solemn profession of the candidates in the presence of God, that they think themselves truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, the church requires that the bishops be well assured, either by their own knowledge, or by the testimonials of credible persons, that the candidates be men of good lives, and free from all noted crimes, as well as for sufficient learning for the discharge of their office. To this end it is wisely enjoined, that the candidates shall bring sufficient testimonials of their sober life, from such as

have known and lived near them for three years before. Moreover, they are to undergo the trial and examination of the arch-deacon, who is to assure the bishop he thinks them apt and meet, both for learning and godly conversation. And yet, to prevent any scandalous intruders, the bishop, before he gives them their commission, makes a public application to the congregation, to enquire whether they know any impediment, why the persons presented should not be ordained; and, if any crime is objected against any one, the bishop is to delay giving him orders till he has cleared himself. And, as a farther security in this matter, if a bishop shall be convicted of any culpable neglect in admitting candidates, he shall be suspended, by the arch-bishop of the province, from conferring orders for two years. It is to be heartily wished that all persons concerned would be very conscientious in signing testimonials, that this admirable method might not be rendered ineffectual by an ill-timed complaisance; for which they must severely answer at the dreadful tribunal of God; since eminent hands may mislead a bishop the best disposed to do his office.

Q. What is the office of a bishop?

A. The office of a bishop contains and includes in it all the sacerdotal powers; and, by consequence, the powers of the inferior orders; as, to dispose of the church's alms, to preach and pray, to administer the holy sacraments, and absolve penitents. And moreover, contains peculiarly the power of consecrating bishops to succeed them in vacant sees, and of ordaining those inferior officers, Presbyters

and deacons, and of confirming those that renew the solemn vow, that was made, in their names, at their baptism. It hath the inherent right of administering the censures of the church, and the power of ruling and governing it, and providing for its welfare by good laws.

Q. How were the bishops called in the apostolical age?

A. Those whom we now call bishops, were, in the first age of the church, styled apostles, and, by St. John, in the revelation, angels. And the words bishop and presbyter, in the same age, were used often promiscuously to denominate the same order, and generally that which we now call the order of priests. But, in the succeeding age, and that whilst St. John was alive, the governors of the church abstained from the name of apostles, and were contented with that of bishops; and then the second order was called altogether Presbyters. And, that the title of bishop was appropriated thenceforward to those that had the power of ordaining, confirming, and governing, is plain from the ecclesiastical writers of that age. So that it is not so much the name, as the distinct powers, which are contended for; of which there will be an account given on the next season of these Ember-fasts.

Q. What do you mean by an arch-bishop?

A. When Christianity began to spread over the provinces of the Roman empire, the bishops of lesser cities were subordinate to those of the greater, after the method of the civil government; the chief bishop was originally styled the first bishop or primate,

and, in the following ages, metropolitan and archbishop; who was not superior to other bishops in order, but only in jurisdiction. All learned men agree, that metropolitans were of very great antiquity; and some, of an eminent character, have thought them of apostolical institution, and that Timothy and Titus were such. The Privileges that belong to these chief governors of the church, are, to confirm the elections and consecrations of all bishops, in their provinces; to summon the bishops of their provinces to hold synods under them; to enquire into the manner and opinions of the bishops under their jurisdiction, and to censure, with suspension or deprivation, according to the heinousness of the crime; and lastly, to hear and determine causes between contending bishops, and to interpose their authority, in all affairs of their provinces which are of great moment.

Q. What solemnity was anciently used in admitting men into holy orders?

A. According to primitive practice, men were admitted officers in the church of Christ, by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands. Our Saviour directed his disciples to pray, immediately before he created them apostles, and doth himself retire to pray to God for success in a matter of such great importance. In this manner did the apostles convey the spiritual powers they received from their master; and the custom was observed regularly, in the succeeding ages of the church; neither is it reasonable that men should be admitted to so honourable an office as the care of souls, without some

solemn investiture, when no office of trust is conveyed without some form of creation.

Q. What may we learn from the institution of these several orders in Christ's church?

A. To be thankful to God for his great goodness, in establishing such orders of men, on purpose to transact with us, in his name, the momentous affair of our eternal salvation. To continue stedfast in the communion of a church, which is so conformable to the ancient model for discipline as well as doctrine. To obey those that have the rule over us, as those that watch for our souls. To observe those pious regulations, which our spiritual governors shall, from time to time, enjoin for the building us up in our holy faith. To spend these fasting days in devotion and retirement, with particular intercessions for all orders of the clergy; that the bishops may lay hands suddenly on no man, and may be eminent for their piety and charity; that they may govern with justice and equity, and shew great gentleness and moderation in their behaviour towards all men; that all they, who engage in any holy function, may have a due regard to the great ends for which it was instituted, and that they may be furnished with all those abilities which are necessary for the discharge of their ministry.

THE PRAYERS.

I. ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who hath purchased to thyself an universal church by the precious blood of thy dear Son; mercifully look upon the same, and, at this time, so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the bishops and pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of thy church. And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function, give thy grace and heavenly benediction, that, both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. ALMIGHTY God, giver of all good things, who, of thy great goodness, dost vouchsafe, at this time, to call several of thy servants to the office of deacons in thy church; make them, I beseech thee, O Lord, to be modest, humble, and constant in their ministration, to have a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; that they, having always the testimony of a good conscience, and continuing ever stable and strong in thy Son Christ, may so well behave themselves in this inferior office, that they may be found worthy to be called into the higher ministeries in thy church, through the same, thy

Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour, world without end. Amen.

III. ALMIGHTY God, giver of all good things, who, by thy Holy Spirit, hast appointed divers orders of ministers in the church; mercifully behold thy servants, now to be called to the office of priesthood, and replenish them so with the truth of thy doctrine and innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve thee, in this office to the glory of thy name, and the good of thy church, through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

IV. GRANT, O Lord, that all those who dedicate themselves to the service of thy altar, may be inwardly moved, by the Holy Spirit, to take upon them that sacred ministration; that their consciences may testify to them, that, by engaging in this holy calling, their chief design is to serve thee, promote thy glory and edify thy people; that they may neither be led by ambition nor covetousness; that neither the honours nor the revenues that are annexed to this profession, may have any competition, in their minds, with a mighty zeal for thy glory, and a desire to promote the salvation of souls. To this end, O Lord, grant that they may make thy holy writ the chief subject of all their studies; that they may from thence instruct thy people committed to

their charge, and silence Gainsayers; that they may faithfully and diligently administer thy holy sacraments; that they may labour in season and out of season, by private and public admonitions and exhortations; that they may maintain peace and love among all Christians, and frame themselves and their families according to the precepts of thy holy Gospel. Give them the will, O Lord, to do their duty, and strength and power faithfully to perform the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE

CHURCHMAN ARMED

AGAINST

THE ERRORS OF THE TIME.

PART II.

ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND TESTS.

PREFACE.

THE subject to which we are now desirous of calling the attention of the reader, is to ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND TESTS; a subject, at all times, of the most vital importance, not only to the general cause of Christianity, but to the peculiar interests of each political body, in which it is professed; and, at this time, a matter of the deepest reflection to every one who bears the name of Christian, as it involves the fundamental principles of that religion, which he considers as the source of all his consolation here, and of all his hopes hereafter.

There has not been a more powerful enemy to the progress of Christian faith, than the frequent dis-

sensions which have existed among its professors. Diversity of opinion and discordance of belief, offend the prejudices of the captious and distract the faith of the wavering; and, while they increase the animosity of contention on one part, encourage, on the other, a general indifference and neglect. No discussions are conducted with so much rancour, no disputes are characterized by the presence of so unchristian a spirit, as those in which the doctrines of Christianity are most involved; from which circumstance it too often happens, that those who, from a love of quiet, or from any other cause, maintain a neutrality between the contending parties, repose themselves in a sort of sullen disregard and sceptical unconcern, and, from professing to find the Church of Christ any where, or every where, finally entertain the hope, which has been gradually engendered by apathy and caprice, that they shall find it no where. So while the spirit of Christian charity is evaporated amidst the fury of contending parties on the one side, it subsides into thoughtless indifference or practical infidelity on the other.

To meet the various and complicated evils arising from this fatal source, it has been considered no less indispensable to the political, than to the religious interests of every well ordered government, to erect a CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT; or, in other words, to choose one out of the various contending parties, whose doctrines the State shall approve and prefer, whose discipline it shall honour and protect, and whose professors it shall encourage and maintain. With the reasons of this preference, or with the

truth of the doctrines thus approved, the idea of a Church Establishment has no immediate connection. Our attention will be directed to these points, when the Church itself, and its own peculiar merit, shall come under our review; all that now requires our consideration, is the necessity of such an establishment to further the interests of Christianity in general, and to promote the welfare and happiness of each particular political body. Anarchy in politics is the necessary attendant upon anarchy in religion. Hence it has been the constant policy of those who have aimed at the destruction of all civil government, to direct the first blow at the Church Establishment; for, as long as the Church remains unpolluted, the bonds of civil union are still uninjured. The eventful period, in which our lot of existence has been cast, has too clearly disclosed the fatal success of so nefarious and so deep-laid a policy. The history of our own country in former years, and the record of our own experience in these latter days, will bear a powerful and overwhelming testimony to the practical truth of these opinions. The political and the ecclesiastical establishments of a State mutually support and maintain each other; they grow with each other's growth, they strengthen with each other's strength; it is the State which protects, honours, and cherishes the Church; it is the Church which defends, adorns, and consecrates that political body with which she is so intimately connected.

Nor is this union accomplished for the sake of rendering the Church political, but the government

religious. To infuse into every order of the State a holy zeal in the cause of that Christianity which is a constituent part even of the body politic, to point out a path of religious faith to the multitude of every rank, who have no power to select or to choose for themselves, and to present that uniform appearance of religion, which is so essential to its general and easy reception, is the first grand design of a CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

To the idea of an ecclesiastical establishment, is necessarily attached the notion of those supports by which it is maintained. Of these, an arbitrary imposition of its doctrines on the consciences of all who live under that political body by which it is sanctioned, is by no means to be accounted one. The political inexpediency and the unchristian temper of such a measure will be fully discussed under the article TOLERATION. But that the governing power which maintains one religion should profess another, and while by its laws it sanctions and encourages one form of Christianity, by its example should recommend or enforce another, appears to be an anomaly in any well ordered and compacted political body. This would be to loosen those ties which are essential to its existence, and effectually to introduce that very anarchy and confusion which it is the interest no less than the design of such a body to prevent and to destroy. Though desirable, it is not indispensable that the governed should all profess the same form of religious faith, but that the governors and the government should encourage and support two distinct

religious persuasions, is in practice no less dangerous, than in theory absurd and irreconcileable.

To preserve, therefore, an uniformity of faith among those to whom the authority of government is entrusted, TESTS were introduced, or subscriptions of assent and attachment to that form of religious faith, which the State has established and confirmed. On the existence, and on the nature of such a Test, much argument has been expended in the field of controversy, and much eloquence displayed in the great councils of the nation. Having presented to the reader all that the powerful reasoning of Sherlock and of Horsley have produced on this most important point, it would be presumptuous in us to add a single word to that weight of argument, which appears not only to carry, but to command conviction in every sound and unprejudiced mind.

To the powerful defenders of a Church Establishment in every well ordered State; to the names of Warburton, Hoadley, Ellys, we are proud to add that of the late Edmund Burke. The splendid passage which we have selected from his Letters on the French Revolution is stamped with the same vigour of thought, originality of conception, and power of argumentation which are displayed in all the works of this great master. His penetrating eye pierced into the dark recesses of revolutionary principles and practices; he traced the bloody stream of anarchy and desolation to its foul source; and has most clearly demonstrated that when the religious establishment of a country is attacked by the virulence of avowed and

open enemies, or secretly undermined by the active principle of indifference among its false and designing friends, the political fabric of the State totters upon the same brink of destruction, and will not long survive the fall of its friend, its support, and its ally.

AN

ESSAY

ON

ESTABLISHMENTS IN RELIGION.

BY THE REV. MR. ROTHERAM.

First published in answer to the Confessional.

IT was not necessary that Christianity should always continue in the same circumstances, in which our Saviour himself or his Apostles left it. It was then necessarily in a state of opposition with the civil and religious establishment under which it first arose. It tended directly to the overthrow of that particular establishment, upon the ruins of which itself was to be built. For that establishment was in its very frame and intention temporary, and preparatory to another. And when the times were ripe for the erection of that other, Judaism had then obtained its whole effect, and was of course to give way to that better dispensation which it was intended to introduce. But men's passions and interests were still concerned to support it. And this occasioned some convulsions in its dissolution, whilst human endeavours were exerted to maintain and uphold it beyond that period which providence had assigned to its du-

ration. In struggling for its own support it naturally strove to oppress that infant religion which threatened its dissolution. And hence Christianity was at first in a state of persecution.

Amongst the various wonders of the creation, we find one kind of animal which appears at first a reptile, and then rises on wings active and free, admirable for the elegance of its form, and richness of its colours. Religion had something like its reptile state, from whence after a short struggle occasioned by the change, leaving the empty husk of Judaism behind, Christianity at length broke forth in all its glory.

But Christianity is by no means in the same situation with respect to other civil institutions. There is nothing in the nature of Christianity and of civil government, which necessarily sets them in opposition to each other. All that it had to fear from other civil establishments, was in the attempt which it must necessarily make, to disengage them from those false religions with which they were then united. If they acted offensively against Christianity, it was not for their own sakes, but merely for the sake of the religious system with which they were then in alliance.

Christianity is a friend to government; which it places on a stronger foundation than it can elsewhere find, shewing it clearly to be the ordinance of heaven. It defines and enforces the duties of all the various ranks belonging to society in a manner superior to every other system. It lends its powers and principles reaching to the heart, where no human power can reach, and without which the whole frame of

government must be infirm, and its parts weakly united.

How doth civil government on its part stand affected to Christianity? It mistakes its own interests if it is not a friend to that from which it derives its best support. But what hath it to return for the benefits which it receives from religion? None of equal value. This is no reason however why it should not repay what is in its power. It can take it from amidst the storm of persecution, and place it in the calm; where in a serener station it may take root and encrease.

But is not this serenity dangerous; do not worldly advantages tend to extinguish the true spirit of Christianity; and doth not that spirit appear to most advantage in times of danger? So doth the courage of the hero. But that is no reason why he should seek unnecessary dangers, or decline an honourable peace. Christianity is calculated for all seasons. Its spirit is not confined to any particular situation. It hath its duties of every kind, leaving no possible condition out of its system, but is extensive and generous in its influence, which reaches to every part of social life.

Prosperity may corrupt some minds, which have maintained their purity in adverse times; as the agitated wave preserves its sweetness which it loses when at rest. It is true that worldly advantages are dangerous to virtue, which often preserves its force and vigour whilst it struggles under oppression, but is relaxed and weakened by ease and prosperity. It is

true that the most glorious times of Christianity were those wherein it was opposed and persecuted by all the world; when it was adorned with meekness, humility, patience, and charity: and that those virtues are more rarely seen amidst opulence and power; but in their stead, pride, avarice, and cruelty, have too frequently arisen wherever it hath enjoyed the greatest security and success. But it doth by no means follow from thence, that Christianity should not seek an establishment, or that it should obstinately refuse protection, favour, and every other gift which the civil power is ready to bestow upon it. The only just conclusion is, that we ought to be most upon our guard where we are wont to be the most secure and careless. We must be doubly watchful against the temptations and allurements of prosperity, because they are most insinuating, and least apt to cause suspicion. If we adhere to the principles of our religion, we may walk with safety through every path of life, because it hath its weapons of defence against every enemy.

It is one mark of that heavenly benevolence which our Saviour infused into his religion, that it is directly calculated for the support and consolation of man under every kind of distress. But its benevolence, though poured out most liberally upon the unhappy, is not all exhausted upon them. Its good-will is free and unbounded, addressed to the world at large, knowing no kind of restraint, bringing blessings to the whole human race. To the poor the Gospel was preached, but not only to the poor. It hath its

lessons of duty, it holds forth its means of reformation to the rich and powerful, as well as the low and indigent.

There is nothing in religion which obliges us to fly any temporal blessing. If we make a right use of it, we fulfil the whole intention of our religion. Those maxims which lead the religious into cells and deserts, under a notion of fulfilling the Christian duty of self-denial, have long since been tried, and have been found to be the dictates of superstition. They are unnatural, and ruinous to society. We are obliged to refuse worldly advantages only where they would betray our integrity, and where it would be inconsistent with our virtue to hold them. To refuse them without a reason, would be to refuse the means of exercising virtue.

Religion considered abstractedly is indeed a spiritual thing. But as it resides in the human breast it partakes of all human wants, and breathes all our natural desires. Christians as such are not insensible to the difference of pain and pleasure, nor obliged to act against nature. They are to avoid only what is sinful, and to restrain their desires only as far as they are sinful. There is no temporal blessing therefore which a Christian may not lawfully partake. He may seek and he may enjoy riches, honour, and power. But he must seek them honestly, and enjoy them moderately, considering them as a trust put into his hands for the common good. In a word, as Christians, we are far from being under any obligation to desert our station, but are on the

contrary bound to do our duty in whatever station of life it shall please the providence of God to place us.

Christianity may then breathe the common air, and may exist out of a state of persecution. To say that persecution is necessary to its safety, were a position leading to strange consequences. For then none but the miserable could be Christians; it would then be our duty to seek distress, to delight in torments, and to have an aversion to ease and happiness; and it would then be the duty of the magistrate to persecute Christianity even for its own sake.

Christianity then need not be afraid of the favour of the civil power. Indeed if the advantages on either hand ought to be refused because they have been abused to bad purposes, the civil power might as justly pretend to be jealous of Christianity, as Christianity of the civil power. For it cannot be denied that the doctrines of Christianity, when they have fallen into hands which have been disposed to pervert and abuse them, have been rendered pernicious to society. Instead of breathing benevolence, peace, and good-will, which are natural to them, they have been made to inspire cruelty, and have led to such acts as humanity itself shudders at.

Religion and civil government then hurt each other only by accident and abuse. When rightly exercised and properly understood, they confer the greatest mutual benefits on each other. Religion strengthens the civil power, and the civil power enables religion to carry into effect all the dictates of its benevolence, which otherwise must be spent in fruitless wishes.

And they are as little friends to religion who would deprive it of that ability to do good which it derives from the favour of the magistrate, as those would be to the civil power who should persuade it to stand on its own bottom, rejecting the succours which it derives from religion.

The alliance between government and religion is as old as government itself. At the time of the first appearance of Christianity, this alliance subsisted every where, having descended without interruption from the first ages. Corrupt as religion then was, yet every government in the known world drew succours from it, without which they could never have attained to any considerable degree of greatness and power. If Christianity then, when it put down these false and corrupt establishments, and thereby deprived government of its ancient ally, had refused itself to associate with the civil power, it would have done the most essential injury to society.

When a whole people were converted to Christianity it was not the design of heaven that the magistrate should immediately cast away the ensigns of his power, and abandon his station; that all the bands of civil society should instantly be dissolved, and all ranks of men be reduced to a level. This would make our religion the author of universal confusion. And these are the reveries of wild and senseless enthusiasts.

The Gospel is so far from supposing that heathens alone have a right to be kings and magistrates, that it adds new honour to the royal dignity, and invests the magistrate with a commission from heaven.

Christianity did not come to wage a perpetual war with nature, to cause revolutions in states and kingdoms, and to overset all the establishments of human policy; but on the contrary it was to spread silently amongst them, to incorporate with all human governments, and by infusing gently its laws and principles into them, to mend and strengthen their constitution.

The magistrate therefore when he becomes a Christian may retain his power. His obligation to use it right is strengthened. His attachment to it therefore ought to be stronger than ever. For if he is obliged to use it right by new motives, he is obliged by all the force of those additional motives to hold it fast, and never to abandon it.

When Saint *Paul* expressed his wish, that King *Agrippa*, with all his noble attendants, might enjoy with him the light of the Gospel, he did not make it a part of his wish that they might likewise descend from their high stations, and be like himself mean and distressed; but when he prayed that they might resemble him inwardly, expressly reserved out of his wish a resemblance in outward circumstances. "Would to God," said he, "that not only thou, "but all that hear me this day, were not only al- "most, but altogether such as I am, *except these* "*bonds!*" And at other times he mentions without any marks of disapprobation, but rather with all appearance of respect, Christians of the highest rank, "honourable women," and "saints of *Cæsar's* "houshold."

We may venture to conclude therefore, that there

may be such a thing as a Christian magistrate. A point which seems indeed to admit of little doubt; but yet if we listen to the kind of reasoning which is frequently made use of, we must be sensible that it was not proper to leave it without its proof.

We may therefore now proceed to consider the great question, "what will be the conduct of the "Christian * magistrate with respect to religion."

In the first place it is evident, that by all the laws of Christianity he is restrained from invading the natural rights of mankind and encroaching upon those liberties and enjoyments which all are entitled to, and for the sake of which government itself was instituted. Christianity favours and promotes all the great ends of civil government, and therefore can never be pleaded in vindication of any opposition to them. It is his duty to extend protection to all his subjects. Christianity is an enemy to tyranny of every kind, whether exercised over the bodies or minds of men. He must refrain therefore from persecuting any religion. If Christianity could give a right of persecution on pretences merely religious, society would be so far hurt by it, as it would introduce into the world one new species of oppression, one source of new distress which otherwise could not have been known. He is bound therefore to leave every man in the free enjoyment of his religious opinions, so far as the welfare of society is not affected by them, and even to protect him in that right.

* By the magistrate in this treatise is generally meant the supreme power in every state, wherever it may be lodged.

But do the same laws which withhold him from persecuting every religion, oblige him at the same time to observe an absolute indifference towards all, and to shew no kind of favour to one above another?

The religious character of the Christian magistrate, like that of the private Christian, is not merely of a negative nature, withholding him only from doing ill, without inciting him to do good. Religion is every where a principle of action. As the private Christian is bound not only to refrain from injuring his neighbour, but likewise to do him every kind of good, and as far as lies in his power to propagate that religion which is in himself a principle of goodness, it were strange to suppose that the magistrate is not under the same obligation. As his influence is greater, his obligation must be stronger. It certainly cannot be less. It can never be right to neglect the exercise of a power of doing good because we possess it in a greater extent, which in a less degree it is acknowledged we should be bound to exert. The power of spreading the principles of truth, benevolence, and goodness, is a power to which this reasoning is certainly as applicable as it can be to any other.

If there should be any one who, under the name and cover of religion, should propagate principles and do acts hurtful to society, every private member of society is bound to the utmost of his ability, by the duty which he owes to the public, to suppress such principles and to oppose such actions. The magistrate, as guardian of the public welfare, is above,

all others obliged in this case to exert himself for its preservation. It is his indispensable duty to oppose the spreading of principles so dangerous to society, and to punish the actions as criminal. Nor is it the sanction of an usurped name that ought to screen them from his just displeasure.

On the other hand should there be those who implant in the minds of men principles favourable to society, and lead them to all kind of actions whereby its peace and welfare may best be promoted, he is assuredly bound by all the duties of his station to encourage them. Nor can it be imagined that he ought to neglect them from an affectation of not interfering in religion, and of maintaining an absolute neutrality in all matters relating to it. As he is not to spare criminal actions and evil principles because they may assume the name of religion, so on the other hand he is not to deny his favour to virtuous principles and good actions because they bear the same venerable name. He cannot be indifferent towards religion till religion itself shall be a thing of indifference to civil society: which can never happen till you can find a religion consisting merely of speculation and opinion. But such a religion never existed. Whilst religion has an influence on the actions of men, it must unavoidably have an influence on civil society; and therefore must naturally draw on itself the mutual influence of the civil power. The magistrate cannot look upon the operations of religion with unconcern; since religion may be either an enemy sapping the foundations of his govern-

ment, or a friend bringing new powers for its defence.

The first duty of the magistrate is to grant a free toleration to all religions as far as the safety of the State is not concerned.

It appears to be a second duty to discourage that religion whose principles are of a pernicious tendency, and to favour that whose principles directly tend to the good of society.

In the first case, a regard to the natural liberties of mankind, restrain him from acting offensively. In the second, a regard to the welfare of society forbids him to sit still.

The Christian magistrate therefore is not at liberty to observe a strict neutrality in matters of religion, and to sit an unconcerned spectator of its operations.

But if he is bound to make a distinction amongst religions, so as to suppress those which are hurtful to society, and to encourage those which are beneficial to it, this implies in him a right to judge for himself of the principles of religion, and their effects.

The right of judging for himself in religion, in common with every individual, he certainly would enjoy in a private capacity; and it cannot be supposed that he loses this right when he is invested with a public character. The right of judgment belongs to every station: and it would be strange if the highest ranks in society were not entitled to a right which the lowest claim.

But why do we speak of a right of judgment, a right of exercising a power which God hath bestowed upon us? The gift of a faculty, by Him who gives nothing in vain, must be accompanied by a right of exercising it.

It will be said, that as an individual he has a right in common with all others of judging for himself, in matters of religion, but that he is not to carry his religious opinions into his public character.

To this it may be replied, that he is authorized and chosen by the community, for this very purpose of exercising his private judgment for the public good; and when he enters upon this office, if he is to leave his religion behind him, then he is to leave behind him all his principles of sound judgment, all that light which can best direct his judgment, and that power which alone can effectually bind him to use it for the public good.

It will be objected again, that this power of public judgment was given him only for the preservation and improvement of civil society, and has no relation to religion, in which every man must judge for himself.

It must be replied again, that if the preservation and improvement of civil society depend in any degree on religion, then a commission to exercise his judgment for the attainment of these ends, is a commission to exercise it in religion, so far as the attainment of these ends depends on religion.

He must beware however of a precipitate and ill-grounded judgment. Thousands are interested in

his choice. And by a regard to all their interests, he is obliged to use all the means of right information which his high authority puts in his power.

Thus directed, he is to choose for himself, amongst interfering and contending professions of religion, that which shall appear to be best.

These principles it is presumed will be sufficient to justify the Christian magistrate, in preferring Christianity to paganism, and distinguishing it by public marks of favour.

The same principles will justify him in making a distinction amongst those sects into which Christianity is unhappily divided. For as amongst various religions he is bound to choose the best, so is he bound on the same principles to choose the best amongst different sects of the only true religion. For the same reason that he prefers truth to falsehood, when his choice lies between them, he must also, where there are different degrees and mixtures of truth, prefer the purest before that which hath in it a greater mixture of corruption.

His first wish indeed will be an union in religious sentiments amongst his subjects; and to form an establishment on so large a basis as to take in all persuasions. But if he finds it a vain attempt to reconcile religious parties, and that every concession in favour of one disgusts and alienates another, all he can then do is to establish the best, to render it as pure, as perfect, as evangelical as he can, and to treat with moderation those whom he cannot reconcile.

We are now to consider how far he is at liberty, in his public capacity, to extend his favour to the chosen religion.

The magistrate's bare profession of a religion, gives it in a State some advantage over its rivals, by adding to its other pretensions the weight of his superior example. This advantage he certainly hath a right to give.

But he will not be inclined to stop here. Amongst the candidates for his favour, he will be inclined to give the preference to those who embrace with him that religion which he is convinced is founded in truth, and is best calculated to promote the happiness of mankind. And he will not fear to pursue this inclination, because he is persuaded that by this means he makes a right application of that power and influence which are lodged in his hands. They were lodged in his hands for the public good. And he keeps this great end full in view, when he applies them to the encouragement of those whose principles are best calculated to promote the happiness of society.

It must be allowed that he is bound to employ them for the encouragement of every kind of merit beneficial to society. If his good influence which is freely extended to every other kind of merit, must be withdrawn from religious merit, then let it be shewn that religious merit is not beneficial to society. But so far is this from being true, that it is undeniably the best foundation of every other kind of merit. It prepares the mind for the production of every great and

good quality by which men can deserve well of society.

This merit he will wish to diffuse, and to render it as general amongst his subjects as possible. Consequently he will desire to implant amongst them those principles from which it springs, and to instruct them in the great truths of religion.

It will not be sufficient that he delivers into their hands the sacred books which contain these truths, and leaves them at full liberty to inform themselves. A thousand things will interfere; the cares and pleasures of life will find them full employment, and the sacred books will lie neglected. The interest of the State requires, that knowledge of such importance to its welfare, should not be trusted to so doubtful an issue.

As the magistrate will not trust to the chance of the people's instructing themselves, neither will it be prudent in him to leave a matter of this moment to the hazard of some fit persons being moved, merely by a zeal for the public service, voluntarily to undertake the task of instructing them. As well might he leave every other work of public benefit to be executed by this zeal. It is the duty of his station to provide for the due execution of every branch of the public service, and by proper encouragement to stir up men of abilities to undertake it.

Christianity, in common with all other religions, hath set apart an order of men, and dedicated them to this very purpose of public instruction; who giving themselves up in their earlier years to the study o

their holy law, are prepared in the time of their maturer judgment, to dispense amongst others that knowledge which by their labours they have acquired.

These he will naturally make use of; and will encourage them to diligence in their labours, and an exertion of their talents, by the only rewards he can confer, temporal benefits and civil advantages. And this indeed is no more than an act of justice; because by devoting themselves to this office, they are deprived of every other means of obtaining any part of these advantages. Their abilities are now turned into a different channel, where they flow only for the good of others. Employed in any other way of life, they might have gained an equal share with any of their fellow citizens in all public advantages, to which they have naturally an equal claim. It is reasonable that some share should be secured to them, in lieu of that claim which for the service of the public they resign. They are labourers of the State, and ought by the State to be provided for.

But against this application of temporal or civil advantages it will be objected, that rewards of this nature do not encourage religion but hypocrisy, by bringing many into the Church who have an eye only to these advantages. Whereas had religion nothing to offer but spiritual rewards, it would be embraced by none but those who are content to embrace it for its own sake.

To this kind of reasoning many things may be replied.

Considering things merely in a political light, even

this hypocrisy is an advantage to society. The hypocrite regulates his outward conduct in the same manner as if he were really moved by the inward principle of good. And therefore the dissimulation of goodness, were there the same security for its continuance, is, to political society, the same thing as goodness itself.

That false and designing men may abuse his well-meant encouragement of virtue, will not justify the magistrate in withdrawing his encouragement from virtue.

If this consideration hath any weight with regard to religion, it must have the same weight with regard to every kind of merit, and must engage the magistrate to withdraw every encouragement from every virtue.

For even the smallest advantages given to virtue, are some encouragement to hypocrisy. On these principles therefore the magistrate must deny to religion every advantage in his power; he must deny it a refuge, and a bare toleration; nay, he must be active against it, and bring it to the last proof of suffering, to try its sincerity.

The use of temporal advantages, for the encouragement of virtue and religion, is fully justified by divine providence itself, which hath annexed many signal advantages, even in this life, to religion and virtue.

If the magistrate doth not give temporal and civil advantages to religion, he denies it all that is in his power to give.

We may appeal to experience, whether compelling

religious men to a needless affectation of poverty, be not as likely to produce hypocrisy, as suffering them to enjoy the common advantages of society, and making a proper provision for their comfortable subsistence.

But will not the delicacy of the minister reject the benevolence of the magistrate; and will he not imbibe from his religion a disinterestedness and a temper abstracted from this world, which will set him above all its concerns?

He ought indeed to have higher aims, and to look far above and beyond this life. But amidst our truest pursuit of better things, some degree of care for this life, during our sojourning here, will force itself upon us. The minister of the Gospel must be fed and clothed, either by a miracle; or by his own endeavours, under the usual course and the common blessing of providence; or by the provision of others. To expect a miraculous supply, when other means are open to obtain it, would be an unwarrantable tempting of providence: his own endeavours are exerted to a different end: It remains therefore that he should thankfully accept the provision made for him by the public care, especially as he is by this means enabled to lay himself out more effectually in the proper business of his function. This public provision then is in reality an help to that disinterestedness which is required in a minister of the Gospel, by releasing him from all the vulgar cares of life, and freeing him from those fetters which tie mankind so fast to this world.

To refuse worldly advantages indeed shews a great-

ness of mind, and a mind influenced by better motives. But it is still greater, it is a proof stronger and less equivocal of the mind being under that better influence, to make a right use of worldly advantages. Wealth and power well employed, are a thousand times better in every light, than wealth and power refused. He who flies them may do well; but he who uses them to the benefit of others, doth certainly, and upon all the principles of Christianity, choose the better part.

The teachers and ministers of religion are not as such bound to strip themselves of all worldly possessions and enjoyments, and to seek voluntary poverty and distress. Maxims which lead to all the folly of superstition. The ministers of religion are obliged to set an example to their people, of every kind of virtue belonging to their station; of resignation to the will of heaven, and Christian fortitude under sufferings, when sufferings are necessary; but no less of a right use and application of this world's goods, when they fall fairly to their lot.

They who urge the example of the first teachers of Christianity, as binding its ministers at this day to poverty, should be reminded, as an argument in their own way, that the first hearers of those first teachers were likewise generally poor; or if they happened to be possessed of riches, they freely bestowed them for the support of their poor brethren. If therefore the poverty of the first teachers must descend to all subsequent teachers, why must not the same inheritance be bequeathed by the first to all succeeding hearers? If they plead the different

situation and circumstances of things, as fully exempting modern hearers of the Gospel from the necessity of voluntary poverty, no reason can be assigned why the same plea should not entitle modern teachers of the Gospel to the same exemption.

There is nothing then in the Christian laws to restrain the teachers of its holy doctrines, from accepting the provision made for them by the magistrate; but on the contrary every thing to incline them to unite all their powers with his, in accomplishing a design plainly calculated for the public good.

The Church thus acting under the protection of the magistrate, will set on foot all the most effectual methods of instruction.

For which end, besides the constant lessons of its appointed teachers, it hath its creeds, containing in a small compass, all the outlines and fundamental principles of faith.

It hath its short and plain account of the principal duties of religion, in all its branches.

By these a general knowledge of religion will easily be propagated and kept up amongst the people. This is the first intention and principal use of creeds. As a compendium of Christian doctrines, they are of admirable use in spreading amongst the people, and maintaining in their minds an uniform and comprehensive knowledge of the fundamentals at least of their holy faith, which they themselves could neither so well distinguish, digest into order, nor retain in their memories, if they had them to seek, as they lie diffused through the whole body of the Scriptures.

It may be urged farther, that confession of faith is clearly a Christian duty, and ought to make a part of public worship. But how confession of faith can be practised in congregations with that unanimity, fullness, and deliberate assent that the duty requires, without the help of creeds, and with only the Scriptures at large in our hands, is hard to conceive.

As to the authority on which they stand; let it be observed, that our Saviour himself hath sanctified the use of creeds by his own repeated practice. For how often in the course of his ministry, did he demand from those on whom he was ready to bestow any signal favour a confession of their faith? The forms he made use of were indeed extremely short and simple, but still they were as much and as truly creeds, though they contained but one article of faith, as if they had contained many. "Believest thou this," was his introduction to almost every miracle.

The use of creeds then is derived from our Saviour himself, and confirmed to us by the experience of every Christian age.

A secondary use of creeds arises from the former. For as creeds contain the great articles of faith embraced by the Church, they must be characteristic of that Church, serving as symbols to distinguish it from all others, and remaining to all posterity as monuments of faith, which is thus conveyed unadulterated from age to age.

These creeds must be short and clear, made easy both to the understanding and memory, otherwise they will not answer either intention.

But the Church will provide farther, that none but its genuine doctrines be taught by those to whom it commits the office of public instruction. For their direction it will provide a larger scheme of doctrines, guarding more particularly against the principal errors which have from time to time prevailed. It will require their assent to this system of doctrines, and bind them by some proper engagement, to frame their public instructions agreeably to it. The Church owes this to its own preservation. For did it admit men to the office of teaching without some such security, did it leave them wholly at liberty to propagate what opinions they please, the Church might soon be thrown into confusion, be rent and divided an hundred ways, and, in a word, destroyed under its own commission.

The very act of accepting from any Church a commission to teach, implies an obligation to teach the doctrines of that Church. For no Church can be supposed to give a power to be exerted to its own ruin, nor ought any one to use the power with which he is invested, against that Church from which he received it. At least he cannot be supposed to receive it with an intention so to use it. Since then the security demanded from those who desire to be appointed to the office of public teaching in the Church, binds only to that which the nature of the trust in itself implies, it cannot be thought unreasonable.

These regulations are necessary for maintaining the peace, order, and safety of the Church, and for preserving the purity of its doctrines. The magistrate

therefore will protect the Church in the use of them, and will enforce the observation of them by his own authority.

But his cares for the instruction of his people and the preservation of the Church, will not be confined to the present or to his own times only; but he will extend them into future ages.

This design will lead him to establish seminaries for the education of teachers, and to annex lasting benefits to their office.

And to give all these institutions the greater strength and permanency, he will incorporate them with his civil constitution.

By means like these will the Christian magistrate endeavour to establish amongst his subjects true and genuine Christianity; persuaded that he cannot confer upon them so great a blessing, even with regard only to temporal advantages; and that by this establishment he lays the best foundation for the prosperity, peace, and lasting security of the State.

But some are not easily persuaded to think that religion can become in any respect a proper object of the magistrate's care. And indeed as it hath to do only with a man's own conscience, the care of his salvation, and his happiness in a future state, it must be acknowledged to lie entirely out of his province. Government as it hath the care of civil society, and the improvement of man's condition in that; and religion as it regards only man's spiritual concerns, and his interest in eternity; are two distinct and wholly independent institutions. Considered in this light only, they cannot possibly unite or form any fair a-

llance, and the interfering of one with the other will be a manifest usurpation. But though civil government be wholly confined to man's present condition, and can have no possible concern with his future existence, yet religion on its part is not so wholly engaged about man's future condition as to be unconcerned about his present. His happiness hereafter is indeed its great end, but it is necessarily concerned with his behaviour here in its way to that end. It cannot bring him to a better world, but by taking him under its conduct through this.

Religion then having a natural influence on men's behaviour in society, an influence not casual and uncertain, but extensive, deep, and lasting; and the regulation of men's behaviour in society being the immediate object of civil government, there arises a necessary relation and a strong connection between them.

This shews at once how, and how far, religion is subject to the magistrate; and distinctly marks out the limits to which his care over it may extend. As far as religion operates on society, so far is it subject to the inspection and regulation of the civil magistrate, and so far only.

If the magistrate keeps in view the peculiar end of his own appointment, and the nature of religion, he will not easily mistake the limits of his duty.

Religion being of a peaceful and a spiritual nature, hath in itself no power but that which belongs to the mind, and seeks to extend its dominion by no other means but those of conviction, and the influence of motives suited to the freedom of the mind. To be-

come a subject of this power, the mind must be free, master of itself, and its own determinations; for into the kingdom of religion no slave can enter. All violence and compulsion therefore are utterly unknown to religion, the use of which is so far from serving its interests, that it directly and fundamentally overthrows them.

The sole end of the magistrate's appointment is the preservation of property, and the securing to mankind all the benefits belonging to human society. But finding religion manifestly adapted to promote these ends, he applies it to his purpose. And he is free to apply it; but he must use it agreeably to its nature, which he must remember is free, a friend to the liberties of mankind, and subject to no outward force.

But when he hath chosen his religion, and incorporated it with his government, he is then guardian of the whole constitution; and necessarily of his established religion, as far as it belongs to the constitution. The two parts of this constitution now closely united have one common interest. Just as the immaterial spirit and the body of man, though of different natures, do by the laws of their union sympathize with each other, and the whole frame is affected by disorders arising in either part, or by their health and welfare.

The magistrate intrusted with the care of the whole constitution, is obliged to maintain it by such means as are in his power, that is by the application of civil sanctions. By this means it is that civil pains and penalties can in any degree belong to reli-

gion. They belong not to its distinct nature, but result solely from its state of association with the civil constitution. All coercive power exercised on account of religion is derived from the civil power, and is given by the civil power for its own sake. The Church possesses no human power in its own right, nor exercises it on its own account. It is the provision of the State for its own security. But let the magistrate mark well that the ends of his appointment draw the precise limits, within which his coercive power must be restrained. He must not carry it into the regions of pure and unmixed religion. He must apply his temporal sanctions to religion only where the preservation of the State calls for them.

But should he, though under a pretence of supporting the true religion, lay needless hardships on the professors of others, where the safety of the State doth not require it; deny them a peaceful enjoyment of their own harmless opinions; and employ against them all the cruel machinery of persecution: the true religion itself would be the first to condemn him. For religion is a friend to all the natural rights of mankind, a friend in particular to liberty of conscience, which is as necessary to its own existence as free air is to the preservation of the life of man. To pretend to support religion by persecution, is to make use of malevolence and infernal fury, by way of promoting peace and good will; it is, in the cause of heaven, to put on armour forged in hell.

It appears then that all penal laws relating to the profession of religion arise not from religion itself, but from the civil power; and that they are never to

be put in force for the sake of religion itself, or on any pretence merely religious, but only for the sake of civil government.

Were these principles duly attended to, the religious liberties of mankind would be safe from violation; since the magistrate would never hold up on its account the terrors of the civil power but where he was obliged to do it in defence of men's natural and civil liberties.

And on these principles it must be allowed that the magistrate exercises his authority within its proper limits, when he encourages that religion whose principles are most favourable to society—when he appoints teachers to instruct the people in the principles of that religion—when he demands a security that they shall teach its genuine doctrines, and deliver them uncorrupted to the people—when he provides for the education and support of those teachers—and when he incorporates these institutions with his political system. In all these instances he acts directly for the welfare and security of society.

They who have thought, as some even great men seem to have done, that religion is in all respects, with regard to its outward form as well as its inward constitution, independent on the civil magistrate, and wholly out of the reach of all civil sanctions, have probably been misled into these opinions by fixing their whole attention on the distinct and separate natures of religion and the civil power, without considering their relation to each other, or entering into those new laws which necessarily arise from the connection.

This short view of the nature and expediency of establishments in religion hath been drawn from me by an alarm which I must own I have received from a late applauded publication. The Confessional abounds with spirit, and contains many just observations placed in a striking light, and breathes at the same time a zeal for truth and liberty. Thus qualified it could not fail of engaging the attention of the public, and being received with the warm approbation especially of those who think themselves particularly interested in the design which the author hath in hand.

But yet it seems as if a cloud rested visibly on some parts of the work, preventing the author's full design from being clearly seen. Whilst one professed and obvious purpose is always held up to view, an attentive eye may discover here and there, certain interrupted parts and broken outlines of a much deeper design.

Had the book contained only certain strictures upon some parts of our constitution, pointing out defects, proving them to be such, and pressing for an amendment: had it complained of hardships which conscientious men lie under from certain circumstances in our establishment which seemed to lay undue restraints on Christian liberty: had it fairly represented grievances and called for redress, I should probably have been contented to wait in silence to see its effect, and to observe the impression which it might make on abler judgments. At least if I had been inclined to answer, it would have called

for an answer of a very different nature from that which is now offered to the public, defending those particulars in our establishment which were objected to; removing the objections where they could be removed; and where they could not, joining with the author in wishing for an amendment.

But the Confessional contains many passages of a very different nature, passages which not only complain of some parts of our constitution, but which imply a strong dislike of the whole; which deny that religion comes in any respect under the notice of the civil magistrate, or that it ought to form any connection with government; and which in a word strike at the root not only of our own, but of all religious establishments, and with establishments, at the root of all order in religion.

I am willing to believe that this was far from being the formed and deliberate design of the worthy author; and that he means nothing less than the overthrow of our religious establishment, but wishes on the contrary to see it brought to an higher degree of perfection. These objections thrown out in the very heat of action without any certain aim, may fly to a part whither the skilful engineer would not in a cooler hour have directed them; a part which he meant the least to injure. But since they have escaped the author, and being scattered in a book on many accounts deservedly admired, must fall with the greater weight; it seemed highly seasonable to shew their tendency to the public and to the author himself, and to try at least to obviate their force; it seemed a duty to en-

deavour to silence a powerful battery which, whether with intention or not, was levelled against our foundations.

For this end I have attempted to shew on the principles of plain sense and common prudence the use and necessity of establishments in religion; to shew how naturally the civil and religious powers unite in the common course of things; and in how many respects this union is clearly for the advantage of both.

I shall now proceed to consider the author's objections against religious establishments in general; and then shall add some remarks on the sentiments which he entertains of the Church of *England.*

We will take our ground to stand upon as the author himself hath marked it out for us.* "The "fundamental position, saith he, on which the au- "thority of established confessions in Protestant "communions depends, is this. "Every particular "Church, considered as a society, has a right, as "other societies have, to secure its own peace and "welfare, by all lawful means; and consequently, "to prescribe such terms of communion as appear "to be most expedient for the purpose; provided "that nothing be required, under this pretence, "which is contrary to the word of God, or incon- "sistent with the liberty of other Churches." This is evidently the foundation of their claim not only to a right of establishing public confessions of faith, but to all and every act of authority which the

* Confessional, Chap. II. P. 22.

Church can exercise. It is on the principles here laid down, that Protestant Churches endeavour to establish and to justify all the power they enjoy. This fundamental position therefore I hope to defend against the objections of the author, taking the liberty only to make one addition to it, which the author will not object to, *viz.* that nothing be required inconsistent, not only with the liberty of other Churches, but with the liberty also of its own members, and the rights which belong to every private Christian of judging for himself in religion.

The argument with which the author opens his attack this right claimed by Protestant Churches, is borrowed from Bishop *Hoadley*, who hath ventured to affirm, "that by admitting the principle of self-"defence and self-preservation in matters of re-"gion, all the persecutions of the Heathens against "the Christians, and even the Popish Inquisition may "be justified." The claim of Protestant Churches, as represented above, is to a right of self-defence, by the use of all lawful means. Bishop *Hoadley* is made to say, that this claim will justify the heathen persecutions, and the Popish Inquisition. Surely not, unless you admit these to be lawful means.

In pursuance of the Bishop's opinion, the author proceeds to observe, that "if the Church of *En-*"*gland*, for example, has a right to fix her own "terms of communion, and, in consequence of "that, to secure the obedience of her members by "temporal rewards and penalties; the church of "*Portugal* must, upon the same principles, have an "equal right to secure herself by the discipline of

"an holy office, or how otherwise she thinks proper." That is, the principle of securing peace and welfare by lawful means, by means agreeable to the word of God, and consistent with the liberties of mankind, will justify the use of means arbitrary, unlawful, contrary to Scripture, and destructive of all liberty: which is flatly asserting, that lawful and unlawful, agreeable to the word of God and contrary to that word, are all one and the same thing.

No society can exist without willing its own preservation. The same principles which incline men to unite in society, must incline them to maintain that union. And they are justified in maintaining that union, by the same reasons which justify them in forming it. To deny to societies a right of self-defence, is to deny them a being. For how can that society subsist which is careless of its own preservation?

The principle of self-defence in the case of societies, must indeed be under some regulations, which are not required in the case of individuals. It is the first duty of every individual to preserve his being, because his being is the immediate gift of the Creator. But societies are brought into being by human contrivance, and their first production may be wrong. They may have no right to a being. And they can have no right to defend their being, if they have no right to the being itself. And this is no uncommon case, for many societies are in their very nature and constitution unlawful.

But where societies are formed upon just principles, they must have a right to defend themselves by

lawful means; otherwise, all the strength of society is radically destroyed. And this is the right of self-defence claimed by Protestant Churches.

But the author goes on. "The proviso that "Church ordinances be agreeable to the word of "God, will not in the present case help the Pro-"testant Churches at all. Established confessions, "being human compositions, must either be subject "to examination by the private judgment of those "who profess, (as all Protestants do) to make the "written word their only rule of religion; or else "the Church must claim a right of interpreting the "Scriptures for all her members, exclusive of the "right of private judgment. The former of these "principles manifestly precludes the right of the "Church, to establish any thing as a condition of "Christian communion, without the previous con-"sent of all her members; that is to say, of all who, "without that condition, would have a right to "Christian communion. The latter, indeed, vests "the Church with a full measure of authority to "establish what she pleases; but then it is an au-"thority which every Protestant Church most ex-"pressly disclaims, and condemns in the Church "of *Rome*, as an impudent and groundless usurpa-"tion."

This reasoning proceeds upon a supposition, that in Church government there is but this alternative, either that every member shall personally assent to every law belonging to it, or that the Church must claim an absolute right of establishing what she pleases. But surely a medium may be found. The

laws of Church communion may be open to the examination of private judgment, without giving every private member of the Church a right to assist personally in framing those laws. And the rulers of a Church may have a right of framing laws for its government, without claiming a right of establishing in an arbitrary manner whatever they please, or excluding the right of private judgment. There are, in a word, degrees both of liberty and power. If there were not, they could never come to any agreement, they could never unite for their mutual support and advantage. Liberty could then never exist without overthrowing power, and power could never establish itself without extinguishing liberty. But they may be modified a thousand ways. In their excess indeed they destroy each other. But human society was ordained to cure the evils arising from their excess. In society they are wholly reconciled. Liberty is strengthened and established, and power, instead of oppressing liberty, becomes its protector. In this case indeed they are both limited; but the limitation gives advantages to both, far exceeding the loss which they sustain.

Thus stands the case in civil society. In order to reap the benefit of which, men agree to have their natural liberties restrained within certain bounds, and establish a power for the defence of liberty thus restrained. If there were no medium between unrestrained liberty and absolute power, free society could never exist. But they may and have been adjusted to each other a thousand different ways; and the proportions may be almost infinitely varied. We

need not enter into a description of all the different kinds of government which have been devised to avoid the inconveniencies arising from the two extremes of wild native liberty, and blind arbitrary power. It is sufficient to our purpose to observe, that there must be in every society a supreme directing power. In a very small society this power may remain equally distributed amongst all the constituent members, because all may personally assist in every public deliberation. But in large societies this is impracticable. In these, natural equality must be given up, and subordination must take place. A power must be lodged in some chosen hands, for the use of the community. These chosen men must have a right of making laws for the government of the whole. But this power may be laid under many restraints to prevent its abuse, otherwise it might be turned to the destruction of that society for whose preservation it was given. Each individual cannot now give his personal assent to every law; but each may have a voice in choosing the legislative body, and a right of remonstrating against every unequal law. In a word, numberless expedients may be contrived, to guard against a misapplication of the delegated power. The general law of its application is plain, that since it was given for the public good, it must be exercised for that end, and must in all cases be directed by reason and the fundamental laws of the constitution.

Let these observations be applied, as far as they will go, to ecclesiastical societies. Men unite together for the sake of the benefits belonging to public

worship, and form a Church, or religious society. If this society is very small, every constituent member may assist in making every law necessary for preserving its peace, order, and welfare. But if the society shall encrease, this scheme of personal assistance is no longer practicable. They must in that case, either disperse; or hold together as well as they can, a confused body without laws or established order; or they must recede from their natural equality, and confer upon some chosen men a power of directing the whole. When they confer this power, they need not convey away their liberty, but may still retain it in as great a latitude as is consistent with the nature of society. They may lay the power under every just restraint, so as to prevent its misapplication; and then instead of destroying their private liberty, it will secure and establish it. Private Christians can now no longer make laws, nor assist in making them: but they may reserve to themselves a right of examining those laws, and of judging for themselves whether or no they are framed agreeably to the great end for which the legislators were appointed.

But it will be said, that between religious and civil society there is a most essential difference. Every private Christian hath a liberty which he cannot make away. His right of private judgment he cannot alienate or make over to another, because on his own judgment alone, and not on that of any other, must the great affair of his salvation be decided, the laws of which are unalterably laid down in the revealed word of God, which must be his only guide.

—True: and therefore it is, that in all religious societies the legislative power ought to be conferred with this restriction, beyond what necessarily accompanies the legislative power in civil societies, that it shall be exercised in a manner agreeable to the revealed word of God. The claim which we have undertaken to vindicate, is expressly said to be under this restraint. And whilst this great principle is observed, the liberty necessarily belonging to private Christians is safe from violation.

It is generally understood that the *British* nation hath a security for their natural rights, and the preservation of the fundamental laws of their constitution, in their great and ancient charter of liberty; and that all laws now enacted must be conformable to that. But whilst our legislators observe the spirit of that great charter, they are at liberty to frame a thousand new laws respecting cases which it hath not provided for.

In the same manner the legislator in religious societies is bound to observe the great charter of Christian liberty, and never to depart from the principles which it contains. But, always following the spirit of that, he is at liberty to make laws suited to many new cases which it hath not provided for.

Should he indeed, departing from his great original, frame laws which are so far from being derived from it, that they are directly in opposition to it; should he attempt to enforce such laws by his own will only; should he deny men's right of judging for themselves of the terms of salvation, demanding that all private judgment should give way before his sovereign au-

hority, and exacting an obedience inconsistent with he allegiance which every Christian owes to the supreme legislator: then it would certainly be the duty of every Christian to oppose his impious usurpation, and to throw off a yoke which would deprive him of hat liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. But this is not the power under consideration; which s a power of maintaining the rights of society, and directed to this end in every part of its execution by he word of God.

To such a power men must either submit, or they must give up the benefits of society in religion. As ingle and individual Christians, they may enjoy the ight of private judgment in its full extent, and each nay pursue his own opinions without controul, whilst ach with a Bible in his hand (if he pleases to take it nto his hand) is a * Church to himself. But good God! what chance is there that the knowledge of eligion should long survive on this footing; where o provision is made for instructing the people in heir faith or their duty, and where every one is left o pursue at his will the cares or the pleasures of this ife, without any stated call to think of religion? The providence of God may indeed keep alive a sense of eligion in the minds of men in such a state, but we are taught so to depend on the providence of God, as not to neglect our own endeavours. Either then all the advantages of public and social religion must be lost, or it must be men's duty to join in society, for the obtaining of those advantages. This neces-

* See Confessional, Note, p. 23, 24.

sarily leads to the appointment of a power to provide for the wants of that society, one of the chief of which is the means of public instruction in the truths of religion. Fit persons must be appointed to convey these instructions; and if fit persons, then there must be some to judge of that fitness.

This authority may be abused. And when the abuse cannot be remedied, we must then obey God rather than man, and leaving such society, be content to enjoy our liberty of conscience in private. We must not unite with others in religion, if our union would bring us into a state of rebellion against our supreme master.

So may civil authority be abused: and in that case I need not point out the remedy. But in both societies this is clear, that we must either give up all social benefits, or submit to that authority which is necessary for the support of society. And it is no less clear, that if we refuse to join our endeavours to obtain the benefits of society, or needlessly disturb mankind in the enjoyment of them, we are enemies to the public good.

To argue that the claim of authority just, reasonable, and necessary for the support of society, will justify usurpation and every abuse of power to the destruction of society, is to confound all distinctions of right and wrong.

And to argue from the natural equality of men, either in a civil or religious capacity, that they need not obey the powers set over them for the general good, is to adopt the way of reasoning, and indeed the very language, of those who formerly oppose

Moses and *Aaron*, their civil and ecclesiastical superiors; "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all "the congregation are holy every one of them, and "the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift "you up yourselves above the congregation of the "Lord*?"

But our Saviour's own divine authority is supposed to be against all religious establishments. A famous attempt hath been made, of which we are now reminded, to shew that our Lord pronounced decisively against them, when he declared "that his kingdom "was not of this world." If we can determine the meaning of our Saviour's proposition, we shall see what relation it hath to this question. In applying it to this question, the occasion on which this declaration was made, seems to have been little considered.

Our Saviour's claim to be the promised Messiah necessarily implied his claim to the office of a King, which was one of the Messiah's prophetical characters. This the Jews well knew. But from this prophetical character they had formed to themselves strange notions of their expected king, flattering themselves that he was to be a great temporal prince, who should raise their declining State to the highest pitch of grandeur, and lead them like *Moses*, by the glory of conquests and triumphs, to universal empire. Our Saviour's appearance in his humble station was little consistent with these expectations; and this they thought at once a sufficient refutation

* *Numb.* xvi. 3.

of his pretensions to the Messiahship. But as these pretensions were necessarily connected with a claim to the kingly office, they drew from thence a charge against our Saviour, which they thought could not fail to ruin him with a *Roman* governor. They accused him of usurping the title of king, which, according to all their ideas of kingship, must mean his claiming an earthly crown, a kingdom of this world, and consequently was an act of rebellion against *Cæsar*. In this light they placed his pretensions before *Pilate*, as appears by what they urged in the course of his trial, to compel the reluctant governor to decree his death. "If thou let this man go thou "art not *Cæsar*'s friend: whosoever maketh himself "a king speaketh against *Cæsar*." Endeavouring thus to convince *Pilate* that out of regard to his own safety he must condemn Jesus, otherwise he himself must appear an abettor of his treason, and an enemy of *Cæsar*.

It was on this charge of guilt that *Pilate* questioned Jesus, and asked him if he claimed to be King of the Jews? Is the accusation true that is brought against thee, that thou callest thyself King of the Jews, usurping the rights of *Cæsar*, to whom only belongs the sovereignty over this people? For *Pilate* himself could have no idea of any other than of a temporal king, whatever some of the Jews ought to have had, if they had understood their own Scriptures. It was in answer to this charge that our Lord replied, "my kingdom is not of this world." That is, I am no king in the sense which it hath been represented to you; the kingdom which I claim is of

a nature totally different from that of *Cæsar*. And as a proof of the truth of what I assert, you see that I have no human power to defend my claim, which I must have had if I had claimed an earthly crown. "For if my kingdom were of this world, "then would my servants fight, that I should not be "delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom "not from hence." This circumstance of my being unsupported by any human power, proves clearly that my claim hath been misrepresented, and that it is of such a nature as to give no just cause of jealousy to *Cæsar*.

This is the plain and natural meaning of what our Lord urged in answer to the accusation of treason against *Cæsar*, brought against him by the Jews. How it can be applied to decide the right of the magistrate's power over the Church is not easy to conceive. The question of the magistrate's power is as foreign to the purpose of our Lord's assertion as any one can be. Our Lord disclaims all temporal dominion, all interference with *Cæsar;* but how doth this shew that another hath no temporal dominion where he himself disclaims it; or that *Cæsar* hath no right to interfere in matters of religion? Whatever *Cæsar*'s rights were before, they remain the same; for our Lord declares that his rights do not interfere with those of *Cæsar*. If *Cæsar* then had a right of exercising his power in religion, our Lord left him in full possession of that right. Whether he had or had not such a right, can never be determined by this passage, wherein our Lord affirms

that he leaves the rights of *Cæsar* just where he found them.

But though our Lord's kingdom be not of this world, yet it will be allowed that he hath a Church in this world. This Church must unavoidably fall under the notice of civil rulers, and the question is how far the members of it ought to be subject to their power. If human power be in any degree necessary for the government of the Church, that power must be left in the hands of the civil magistrate, to whom all human power naturally belongs, and to whom our Lord here declares that he leaves it in its full extent.

If then this text hath any relation to the question about the magistrate's right to exercise his power in matters of religion, it is clearly in favour of the right, and not against it; because it proves that our Lord's sovereignty doth in no degree disturb, diminish, or interfere with the rights of the civil magistrate. They remain just what the laws of God, of reason, and the free appointment and compact of societies amongst themselves have made them, unaltered and wholly unaffected by the erection of the Messiah's kingdom.

And yet this text hath been produced as decisive against the magistrate's right of employing any kind of human authority about religion, with as much triumph as if our Lord on this occasion had protested against the right of the governor to take cognisance of his cause; a cause wherein religion was more essentially concerned, than in any other that ever came

before an earthly tribunal. But our Lord was so far from objecting to the exercise of the civil authority against him, that he behaved with remarkable condescention to *Pilate*, as appears by the mildness of his several replies to him. Nor hath *Pilate* ever been blamed for sitting in judgment upon our Lord, though he hath been justly blamed for suffering himself to be prevailed upon by the clamours of an enraged people, to give sentence contrary to his own conviction.

Our Lord foretels his disciples that they should be brought before kings and magistrates for his sake; but he never suggests to them that they should deny the magistrate's right to sit in judgment on men accused merely on a religious account; or hints that it was an act of usurpation in the magistrate, to call before him the subjects of another and an higher Lord.

And on these occasions when they pleaded as they were divinely inspired, according to our Saviour's promise, it never was a part of their plea that they denied the jurisdiction of the court: on the contrary, Saint *Paul* voluntarily appealed unto *Cæsar;* "I "stand, saith he, at *Cæsar*'s judgment seat, where "I *ought to be* judged."

One Apostle enjoins us to be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. So that this very allegiance due to our Lord, as our supreme head and law-giver, is so far from exempting us from obedience to the civil power, that it is urged by the Apostle as the strongest bond of that obedience.

He tells us again, that magistrates are appointed for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. So that if religion be concerned in promoting well-doing amongst men, or restraining them from doing evil, it expressly falls under the magistrate's notice.

Another Apostle tells us, that the powers which be are ordained of God, and that the ruler is the minister of God. Our being subjects of God then can never exempt us from our obedience to God's ministers, or from subjection to his own ordinance.

The duties of religion and the duties we owe to society are so closely connected with each other, that he who hath a power over us in one respect, must unavoidably have a power over us in the other to a certain degree. And accordingly the precepts and doctrines relating to these different branches of duty, are in the most natural manner intermingled with each other in the holy Scriptures.

The truth is, that though our Lord's kingdom be not of this world, be not founded on human power or supported by it, and though all private Christians in their single capacity are subject to him alone, and to him their universal Lord only accountable for their religious opinions; yet are they still members of society, and consequently must be subject to all those human powers which are necessary for the support and welfare of society, even in their religious capacity, as far as their religion hath an influence on society.

If we argue that there can be no human authority, no earthly power in the Church, because the

Church is Christ's kingdom, and he is the Founder and only head of it; then we may with the same consistency argue that there ought to be no human authority in civil society, because God himself is the founder of society, the Author of all our natural rights, the King of kings, whose dominion ruleth over all, and to whom only power belongeth.

In either society it becomes those who are invested with authority, to consider from whom they derive it; for what great ends they hold it; and to whom they must account for their use of it.

They who in defence of religious establishments require a Gospel precedent, require what the nature of the thing does not admit of. The Gospel contains the history only of the divine original of our religion, and leaves it before it had formed any human connection. How then can the Gospel furnish an example of such connection; or how can the want of the example be an argument against the connection?

But if there could be no example, might we not at least expect some precept enjoining or permitting an establishment of this kind, when it should become proper?

The Gospel is not filled with useless precepts. For such would it certainly have been to tell its disciples, that though the present condition of Christianity required them to suffer persecution, yet when human powers should be more favourably disposed towards them, they were permitted to accept of a truce from persecution, they might lawfully enjoy peace with the world, and were at liberty to put themselves

under the protection of government, and to unite their endeavours with it to promote the public good.

In the mean time the great principles appear plainly legible in the Gospel, from whence the laws of this establishment and union with the civil power are easily drawn; whilst under the sanction of religion itself, obedience to the magistrate is strongly enforced on one hand, and on the other it is made the duty of the magistrate to protect and reward virtue.

The propagation of Christianity over the world was clearly foreseen by the great Author of it, till at length it should become universal. But it could not spread over the world, without either uniting with government or overthrowing it. If we argue either from experience or reason, we must conclude that wherever government is established, religion will be established with it. No country can be said to be converted to Christianity, whilst another religion is in possession of an establishment there. With as much propriety might it be said that the country was conquered, whilst its chief strong holds were in the hands of an enemy. When a country is converted therefore, Christianity must either succeed in the place of the religion formerly established, or government must be left without the support of religion, without which support it can never subsist long.

They who seek a model of Church government in the first and earliest state of Christianity, and pretend that no age is at liberty to vary from the form in which it then appeared, fall into the same mistake as those did who sought for a model of political go-

vernment in the first families of mankind. Both reason from society in its first rudiments to society in its state of highest advancement; as if it were to be supposed that it ought to retain precisely the same form under every degree of increase, and under every variation of circumstances. The error arising from the supposition in the case of civil society, hath been long ago refuted with such strength and mastery of argument, that I presume no one will now venture to maintain it. But the same kind of error seems still to be floating in men's minds with regard to religious society, though what *Locke* hath done for civil government, *Hooker* hath performed in favour of ecclesiastical polity.

The works of these immortal men are two pillars, designed and executed by rival architects, to support different parts of the same building. For whilst the union lasts between civil government and religion (and for the sake of both may it long last!) the safety of the whole constitution must depend on both these parts being well supported. Though springing from different foundations, yet they bend towards each other as they rise, till meeting in the center they form one well-poised arch. This arch can never be sustained by that single pillar which stands on the side of civil government, though strong as adamant. Yet this alone seems to be gazed on by the multitude; whilst its corresponding pillar, built of materials no less precious, and raised with equal skill, is by them overlooked.

They who are best acquainted with the writings of these great men, will find it hard to decide which of

the two hath greater merit, or which hath deserved better of the public. There is indeed a strong resemblance between them, whether we regard the nature and greatness of their designs, or the inimitable manner of their execution. They are equally admirable for their deep penetration, the amazing extent of their views, their solidity of argument, the irresistable force of their conclusions, and the copious light which they throw on every subject that comes under their touch.

But whilst fashion renders it necessary for the most superficial writer to know at least the name of *Locke*, *Hooker* seems to be little attended to, even by writers of a better class, and whose subject leads them naturally towards him. I cannot suppose that the author of the Confessional is unacquainted with *Hooker*; but I must suppose that he did not reflect on the arguments of that great man, when he committed to writing some things in his book. *Hooker* hath clearly refuted that which he justly calls "* a "loose and licentious opinion of those who held that "a Christian man's liberty is lost, and the soul "which Christ hath redeemed unto himself injuriously drawn into servitude, under the yoke of "human power, if any law be now imposed besides "the Gospel of Christ;—and that the Church of "Christ should admit no law-makers but the Evangelists." *Hooker* hath established on principles which never can give way, the right of the legal powers to make laws for the Church of Christ, suited

* Eccles. Pol. Book iii. Sect. 9.

to its present condition, corresponding always with the fundamental laws of the great legislator.

From an inattention to his works only can we account for the darkness that still hangs over this subject, and the deception that many amongst us still lie under with regard to the exercise of human power in the Church.

When we have asserted and maintained that the outward form of the Christian Church in its infancy, was the wisest and best that an infant Church could have assumed, we have done all that our veneration for Scripture requires of us. It can by no means require us to maintain that that very form must necessarily be retained by it through every period of its growth.

Can we suppose that outward change is inconsistent with every thing that is of divine original? We cannot suppose this if we look for a moment amongst the Creator's works. What changes doth the embryo undergo from its first formation in the womb to its maturity! How is the work of vegetation carried on; how springs the plant from the seed; and how doth the lofty oak rise from the acorn! The whole world and every thing around us is in a perpetual fluctuation. And in this very change the wisdom of the almighty ruler is chiefly displayed. Much more gloriously displayed by maintaining the great laws of creation in a changeable world, and preserving a wonderful harmony and consistency amidst a perpetual fluctuation and an endless return of new appearances, than if all things had been for ever fixed under one unchangeable form, though ever

so wisely chosen. A motionless and stationary world would have been as far inferior to our present changeable world, as the marble figure of the artist is to the living and moving human form.

Since then we find even those works of the creation which are still kept wholly under the great Creator's own immediate direction to be subject to continual changes, whilst the laws of order still prevail under all these changes, why should we imagine that in that province of the divine administration, in which man himself is admitted to bear his part, things should remain absolutely fixed? I speak of the formation and government of human society, in which human wisdom hath always been permitted to act under the divine.

We are taught that government itself is of divine appointment; yet heaven hath not prescribed any particular frame or model of government which the founders and rulers of society are bound to follow, but hath left men at liberty to plan for themselves, and to choose such a constitution as may best suit their circumstances; which they are likewise permitted to alter and improve as their experience may direct, adhering however to the fundamental law of public good.

All this is readily admitted with regard to civil society. But there seems to be a general prejudice, as if religious societies had not the same liberty. And yet there is the same reason for it in the case of religious as of civil government; because religious societies are subject to as many changes of circumstances as civil, and therefore human prudence hath

room for the same exercise. And it will exercise itself here likewise, unless it be restrained by the express authority of Scripture.

Scripture presses strongly a regard to order, to public edification, and to the religious liberties of mankind. These fundamental laws must be observed; but whilst we regard these and build upon them, we are at liberty to vary the structure as may best suit the purposes of every society. Had there been a necessity of adhering to any particular outward form of Christian society, that form would have been as distinctly delineated in the New Testament as the Temple was in the Old; and the plan would have been laid down with such precision that we could not easily mistake it. Whereas nothing of this kind hath been done. But the original plan is in reality so indistinct, that the most learned enquirers into antiquity differ about every part of it.

There is one reason for the lawfulness of changing the outward form of Christian society peculiar to itself, besides the other reasons which it hath in common with civil society. For since human governments were already established over the whole world when Christianity first made its appearance, and established under very different forms, it became necessary that it should conform itself in some measure to the nature of those various governments with which it was to unite. It became, as to its outward appearance, all things to all countries, that it might gain them with more ease; whilst, with its own great Apostle, it still retained the same spirit under all these different appearances. Without this compli-

ance its propagation must have been attended with needless difficulties. For either it must have been permitted to accommodate itself to the governments where it was received, or those governments must in many instances have been changed, to bring them to a suitableness with the fixed model of religious government. But to effect these changes in government would have been a work more difficult than the propagation of religion itself. It is what Christianity was so far from ever attempting, that it constantly inculcates obedience to the established government. As a religion of peace it could do no otherwise; and had it been obliged always stiffly to maintain the same external form, this condition must either have prevented its reception in many countries, or have been a means of creating disorder and confusion, and have justified the character which was once given of its first preachers, "these who have "turned the world upside down are come hither "also."

This kind of argument, taken from the immutability of the Divine wisdom, is what the Deist hath long made use of against admitting those changes which revelation hath introduced into religion. They argue that because God is unchangeable, therefore every religion which hath its original from him must be unchangeable likewise; consequently the first established religion must be the only true one, and must remain unalterable. We reply, that because the Divine wisdom is unchangeable, its operations in different circumstances must be different. The same wisdom and the same goodness which gave to our first

parents a law of duty, and a light for their direction, suited to their situation, would, when mankind were in a different situation, naturally give them another law, and afford them other lights, such as their situation required. To have continued the same law to mankind when mankind were no longer the same, would have been no argument either of wisdom or of consistency. This very fact proves the unchangeableness of the divine wisdom and goodness, that they have accompanied mankind under every change of circumstances, and have provided for all his new necessities. Thus do we justify the changes that have taken place in religion, and vindicate the various dispensations of heaven towards us.

They who suppose that Christianity must always retain its first outward form, go upon the same mistaken apprehensions of the immutability of the divine wisdom as doth the Deist. It must undoubtedly adapt itself to the various situations of human society. It is not bound to stipulate for itself as a condition of its reception, that human societies shall change their form, and that a republic shall become a monarchy, or a monarchy a republic. Christianity freely associates with every species of government; otherwise its form would be a continual bar to its reception.

Yet still it will be urged, that since our Saviour himself was once at the head of his visible Church, and must be supposed to have settled it in the best and most excellent form, he hath hereby sufficiently made known his will, and obliged it in all future times to retain the same form.

As often as this is urged so often must it be replied, that the form which he gave was the best and most excellent which it could then have assumed; but it by no means follows that it is the best for all succeeding ages, and for every possible situation. It was then the best, because it was suited to its particular situation. For the same reason it cannot be the best in all succeeding ages, because it is not suited to the very different situations into which the Church must necessarily come, in the course of its progress and establishment through so many different countries.

Nay, to shew how little weight there is in this kind of argument from our Saviour's personal government of his Church, we see that in the very next instance, the Apostles themselves departed from his model. They appointed officers under a different name and with a different authority from what our Saviour himself had done, and framed local and temporary laws suited to the present situation of their new religion, whilst they sought to disengage it by gentle means from that ancient institution from which it was descended.

Thus much I thought it necessary to say on this subject, in hopes of removing the prejudices, and allaying the distaste which Christian societies are apt to conceive against each other on account of external forms, till a zeal for these leads them to forget the spirit of religion.

It had been argued for the necessity of human establishments in religion, by a writer in defence of the Essay on Spirit, " that the welfare and support

"of society is so founded by the great author of "nature, on the basis of religion, that it is impos- "sible to separate the one from the other; and of "consequence, the establishment of the one will "necessarily require the establishment of the "other."

To this our author replies, "that there is a sophism "here in the word establishment. Religion, saith "he, may be said to be established, when it is re- "ceived and professed by individuals, upon the sole "authority of divine revelation.—If then the esta- "blishment of religion by divine revelation is suffi- "cient to answer the purposes of civil society, the "purposes of the great author of nature in creating "this connection, are answered at the same time; "and with any farther establishment of religion, "human laws have nothing to do. *"

The effectual promulgation of religion, and its reception, or if you will, its establishment amongst individuals, and that solely on the authority of revelation, is the end and intention of all public religious establishments. It is therefore this very consideration, which is here strangely brought as an objection against establishments, that alone shews the use and the necessity of them. For without established means of making religion known to the people, of instructing them in its laws, explaining to them its divine authority, and enforcing upon them its sanctions, it is to be apprehended that the individuals of society would soon fall into gross ignorance, both as

* P. 208, 9.

to the knowledge of religion itself and its divine authority. Human and civil establishments in religion are no other than wise and necessary provisions made by public authority, for securing that establishment of which the author speaks, in the minds of individuals. A religious establishment is not, as this objection seems to insinuate, an attempt to take religion from its own basis of divine authority, and to place it on the weak foundation of human authority; but it is a public establishment of its own divine authority, as the best means of securing its reception amongst individuals.

"But who is the judge, how far it may be necessary to establish religion by human laws? The defender answers without hesitation, the same legislative powers which establish the one, have a right to establish the other; and to chuse that religion which they think to be best."

"Where, says the author of the Confessional, it must be supposed, that the great author of nature hath left it as free for magistrates, and legislators, to establish by human laws what doctrines or modes of religion they chuse, or find expedient for secular utility; as it is for them to chuse what modes of civil society they find convenient. Which indeed is to suppose, that there never was any authentic revelation of true religion in the world. For as surely as God has revealed true religion, so surely has he inhibited magistrates and all others from establishing any thing contrary to it, or deviating from it."

The great author of nature hath undoubtedly left

it as free for magistrates and legislators, to establish by human laws what doctrines or modes of religion they choose, as to choose what modes of civil society they find convenient, whilst they have a regard to those laws by which their choice ought to be directed. Their liberty is equal in both cases. That is, they are free in both cases only to choose the best, and such as are fittest to answer the great ends of government. In civil establishments the lawgiver or the magistrate are certainly no more at liberty to make choice of laws hurtful to society, than they are to establish errors or corruptions in religion. The public good is to be their aim in both cases alike, towards which they are to be guided in civil establishments by reason and the laws of nature, in religious establishments by the best lights they can obtain. They are as free then to establish doctrines contrary to true religion, as to establish laws contrary to the just and natural rights of their subjects. That is, they are not at liberty to do this knowingly and designedly in either case. Their steps must always be directed towards the same great object of the public good, whether they tread on civil or on sacred ground. From this great object they are no where at liberty wilfully to deviate. But their involuntary errors and deviations will be pardoned, and the uprightness of their intention will be accepted by every equitable judge in excuse of their errors. In the mean time, the supposition that the magistrate may innocently deviate from the true religion, no more implies that there never was an authentic revelation of true religion, or that he hath no right to form a religious esta-

blishment; than the supposition that he may in civil cases deviate from truth and equity implies that there is no such thing as truth or equity, or that he hath no right to form a civil establishment. For as surely as God hath by reason and revelation made known the true end of the magistrate's appointment, so surely hath he inhibited magistrates and all others from establishing any thing contrary to it, or deviating from it.

But we must beware, it seems, whither principles of this kind may lead us. For "whatever right "Christian legislators have to establish what reli-"gion they chuse for the best, the same had the "Pagan legislators*."

True. And yet so far from considering this as a refutation of our principles, we rather look upon it as a strong confirmation of them. We are far from being ashamed of the company of Turks and heathens in such a cause. Nor shall we reject the benefit of an establishment, because we enjoy it in common with them.

Had our arguments arisen from something peculiar to our own system, had they been local and appropriated to ourselves, there might have been cause to suspect that they borrowed much of their force from our partiality to our own case. But when we find them prevailing in every State, and spreading over the whole globe, we are no longer at liberty to doubt of their validity.

The union of religion with civil government is not

* P. 210.

not peculiar to Christianity, though Christianity strengthens that union above all other systems. But what must they do to whom Christianity is unknown? Must the State in all those times and countries which are not blessed with the light of true religion, reject all assistance from religion; and must it there remain widowed and bereft of its best support? It must, unless our principles may be permitted to extend their influence to every State; unless it be the duty of every people to direct themselves as well as they are able by the inferior lights of heaven, where the sun himself hath not yet risen upon them.

He who pleads in defence of establishments in religion, doth not plead the cause of a single people; but the cause of human society.

To object to us then the universality of our principles, is to object that which most effectually tends to their support.

The author hath one argument which certainly must have escaped him in the heat of composition, and which I should imagine upon cooler thoughts he will not be inclined to defend. It is as follows. "Upon the genuine grounds of separation from the "Church of *Rome*, all particular Churches are co-"ordinate; they have all the same right in an equal "degree; and the decisions of one are, in point of "authority, upon the very same level with those of "another. This being so, I do not see how it is possible for any Church to exercise this right in those instances where she establishes doctrines peculiar to herself, and inconsistent with the doc-

" trines of other Churches, without abridging those " Churches of this right to establish their own doc- " trines. No Church can have a right to establish " any doctrines but upon the supposition that they " are true. If the doctrines established in one " Church are true, the contrary doctrines established " in another Church must be false; and, I presume, " no Church will contend for a right to establish false " doctrines*." That is, no one hath a right of judgment, because all may err.

Try then the same argument upon private judgment. For " all private individuals are likewise co- " ordinate; they have all the same right in an equal " degree; and the decisions of one are, in point of " authority, upon the very same level with those of " another. This being so" the same conclusions must follow in both cases from the same premises. Both cases are therefore embarrassed with the same difficulty, if it be a difficulty. The skilful author can readily remove it out of the way of private judgment for which he is an advocate. He need only try the same solution in the other case to see the weakness of his objection.

Every Church, every community hath a right of judging for itself in the same manner and on the grounds as every individual enjoys this right. If not, there is an end of all liberty of judgment. If societies must not determine for themselves, who must determine for them? If their being liable to err debars them from this right, then it must follow

* P. 33.

that this right hath been long since lost to individuals as well as to societies.

A right of judgment cannot be thought to imply an infallibility of judgment, or to have any connection with so senseless a claim, and so far unbecoming any man or body of men to assume.

Individuals and societies have alike this equal and original right of personal judgment, which in no manner can be supposed to depend on the use that others may make of theirs. Can another person, can another country be debarred of this right of judging for themselves, because I and my country have judged amiss?

The truth is, that all have a right of exercising their judgment for themselves only. Whilst they are contented with this exercise, whether they employ it well or ill, they do by no means interfere with the rights of others. If they err, they err to themselves. Let all keep within their proper limits and all is well. But if they pretend to judge for others, and to compel them to a conformity with their opinions; then the rule of equality and co-ordination is broken in upon; then begins the invasion of another's right; and then judgments, decrees, and establishments are carried beyond their proper bounds.

Such are the objections which the Confessional hath brought against religious establishments in general, and against the principles on which all protestant establishments are defended. We are now to consider the sentiments which the author entertains of the Church of *England* in particular.

The Church of *England* is charged with the folly

of *self-adulation**, and is said to entertain much higher ideas of its own perfection than are due to it.

But without being chargeable with this folly, we must be allowed to boast that the fundamental principles on which it stands are right, and that in this respect it is excelled by none. The Church of *England* rests on the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the right of private judgment; collecting all its doctrines from the Scriptures for itself and its own members; and leaving those who dissent from it to a peaceful enjoyment of their own opinions.

But yet it is charged with invading the right of private judgment whilst it professes to maintain it, because it hath a set of doctrines drawn up according to its own sense of Scripture, to the truth of which it requires its ministers to subscribe, and to take them for their guide in their public instructions, without which condition it will suffer none within itself to assume the office of teaching.

As a religious society it hath an undoubted right to judge for itself of the sense of Scripture, to frame its doctrines agreeably to that sense, and in its public instructions to adhere to those doctrines. It compels none to embrace its doctrines, much less to teach them, contrary to their own conviction, but leaves them to the free enjoyment of their own opinions.

Is there any Church, is there any congregation which doth not exercise this power, or can any long subsist without it? Every religious society it is pre-

* Preface, p. 23.

sumed hath its doctrines and its common principles on which it is united in itself. And the preservation of peace and order, nay the preservation of its very being, requires that it should have a power of excluding from itself such as would oppose those common principles, and endeavour to subvert them.

Thus much is necessary for the preservation of order, and the maintenance of sound doctrine. The maintenance of order is a Christian duty. It is a duty incumbent upon the Church of *England* in common with every other community, and a duty particularly pressed upon it both by the example and the precepts of our Lord and his Apostles.

Our Lord himself, the fountain of order as well as of all power in his Church, appointed and divinely commissioned governors in his Church. His Apostles, as the increase of the Church required it, constituted others. And if external appointment of different ministers to their peculiar offices, if outward regulations for the preservation of internal peace and order, were necessary even at that time, when the influence of the Holy Spirit was most powerful and most visible: it will not by any reasonable man be supposed, that outward regulations should now be laid aside, and that we should entirely trust to the over-ruling agency of the Holy Spirit for raising up ministers in his Church, and preserving its peace and welfare without any endeavours or any prudence of our own, now when his agency is less visible.

Saint *Paul* hath several striking descriptions of that beautiful order which is required in the Christian Church, and of the mutual subordination and

dependance of the parts one on another, and of all on their supreme Head.

In the scripture history of the primitive Church we clearly see an establishment, or at least the visible seeds and first principles of an establishment.

The establishment then indeed could have no mixture of civil power in its constitution, at a time when all civil power was armed against it. But the Gospel, by requiring of its Church every act of obedience that is due to the civil power, and by applying its own divine authority to strengthen and sustain it, manifestly prepares them for a connection with each other.

All that coercive power which belongs to the constitution of the Church of *England*, is merely such as the wisdom of the State hath provided for its own security. If amongst us there are any pains and penalties inflicted upon the adversaries of the Church, it is not on a religious but on a civil account; it is not because they are enemies to the Church, but to the State. These methods of defence are not practised because the Church is of divine original, but because it hath contracted an human alliance, and is by law established: and so established for the sake of the civil constitution; which takes it into its peculiar favour, because it is calculated to promote, beyond any other religious system, the peace, order, and welfare of society.

If there be any thing like a force and constraint upon private judgment amongst us; if there are any hardships laid upon those who dissent from the Church established; if there be any application of religious

ests to civil purposes; they are all to be placed to his account. And when the safety of the State hall no longer require or dictate such constraint or uch penalties, the Church of *England* will be the irst to rejoice at their removal.

If the safety of the State had not been supposed o be connected with the safety of the Church esta-ıllshed, it never would have been established. No ieculiar benefits would have been annexed to it, no ıardships laid upon those who oppose it or who lissent from it. Whilst this connection is believed o subsist, the State will probably think fit to con-inue the same fences round the established Church.

In a word, the Church of *England* hath no tem-ıoral power but what the safety of the civil consti-ution requires it should have. And thus much every Church associated with civil government will, and ıught to possess.

But the Church of *England* is charged with being o far intoxicated with the vain opinion of its own ıerfection, as to pretend to something like infallibility. A famous sarcasm formerly thrown out against it, is ıow repeated. "The Church of *Rome* is infallible, 'and the Church of *England* is, it seems, always 'in the right*." Doth the Church of *England* hen, like the Church of *Rome*, arrogantly dictate to ıll mankind, and pretend to submit to its decisions? Doth it demand an implicit faith in its determinations, forbidding the exercise of private judgment, and de-

* Pref.

nying it that heavenly light by which alone it can with safety be directed? Or doth it on the other hand, ask no other regard to its own doctrines than as they stand on the sacred authority of Scripture; permitting, exhorting, and freely assisting all to compare its doctrines with those infallible oracles of divine truth?

The Church of *England* indeed doth not acknowledge itself to be in the wrong wherever its adversaries would have it to be so. But if because it doth not confess itself to be in an error, it therefore may be said to claim infallibility, then I suppose any Church in the world may be said to claim it. The Church of *England* is in no other sense always in the right, than every other Church is. For every Church, it may be presumed, thinks itself to be right, and the Church of *England* doth no more.

If this be infallibility, not only Churches but simple individuals every day claim it. Every man who forms any deliberate judgment thinks himself right; and that not on religious subjects only, but on every other subject. Every writer of a book who publishes his opinions to the world may be supposed to think himself right.

So that if this be infallibility, as far as I can perceive, it is universal; and the pope is far from being singular in the claim.

The degree of toleration allowed to those who dissent from the Church of *England* is not, it seems, satisfactory. "The toleration contended for by the "advocates of religious freedom, is, we are told,

'absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and 'impartial liberty *."

If by the liberty described in these terms be meant indeed absolute liberty, so that every man shall do what is right in his own eyes, without restraint and without controul; then it is plainly the liberty of man released from all the bonds of society, and such as he cannot possibly enjoy in a social state.

If it implies that the magistrate shall absolutely make no distinction of men on account of religion, regardless what the man's principles may be whom he advances to dignity and power; then must the defence of Christianity itself be abandoned, infidelity and religion must be put upon the same footing, and the spoils of government be shared alike by Turks, idolaters, and atheists.

But I will be answerable for the author, that he doth not mean to contend for this. He will allow that the Christian magistrate shall give a preference to Christianity before paganism and infidelity. But if the magistrate be allowed to make this distinction, he will on the same principles distinguish farther. Give him liberty but to make this first step, and you enter him into a course from whence he cannot be recalled; nor will it be in your power to stop his progress till he arrives at an establishment.

But if liberty, when it talks in this raised stile, and comes attended with this train of epithets, means no harm to society; but is still willing and ready to de-

* Preface, p. 46.

mean itself peaceably, and submit to such regulations and restraints as the order and welfare of society require; then do we acknowledge it again by its features, notwithstanding a little unusual vehemence of language, to be no other than our own established and constitutional liberty.

The Church of *England* seems to the author to act with inconsistency when she requires the assent of her teachers to articles of religion, to which the laity are not called upon to give their assent. "Cer-
"tain it is, saith he, that, in so far as the laity are al-
"lowed not to be bound by these Church confessions,
"the point of right to establish them as tests of or-
"thodoxy is fairly given up, as well for the clergy
"as the laity; since whatever rule is sufficient to
"direct the faith and practice of the layman, must
"likewise be sufficient to direct the teaching of the
"clergyman, unless the clergyman may be obliged to
"teach doctrines, which the layman is not obliged
"either to believe or to practice *."

To this our honest and judicious Church historian will return a proper answer in behalf of the Church of *England*. "No lay-person was required to sub-
"scribe, no magistrate, none of the commons, ac-
"cording to the severity in other places.—Not that
"the queen and State was careless of the spiritual
"good of others, (leaving them to live and believe
"as they list) but because charitably presuming that
"where parishes were provided of pastors orthodox

* P. 27, 28.

"in their judgments, they would by God's blessing "on their preaching, work their people to conformity "to the same opinions *."

The authorized teacher of religion is supposed to be acquainted with the whole compass of Christian doctrines, which he is appointed to teach the laity. And therefore he may well be required to subscribe to the doctrines which he is appointed to teach; though it would be less proper to call upon them to subscribe to the doctrines which they are to be taught. Besides, care is to be taken that the true faith be delivered to the people; and on this account chiefly it is necessary that the teacher be laid under an obligation to teach the true doctrines of religion. Were he permitted to assume the office without first giving proof of the rectitude of his own opinions, he might defeat the very end of his appointment, and instead of conducting his people to the truth, lead them into error. Error in a private Christian may remain in his own breast. But in a public teacher it is a spreading evil; it is an infection which by the nature of his office he is obliged to communicate to others, and to circulate as far as his influence reaches.

The distinction therefore which the author cannot account for, and from which he would draw consequences prejudicial to the rights of the Church, arises from the very nature of the pastoral office, and is grounded on these two plain reasons.

That there may be supposed a difference of know-

* *Fuller's* Ch. Hist. Cent. xvi. B. 9. Anno. 1563.

ledge between the instructor, and the people to be instructed.

And that every proper precaution should be taken that the people may not be misled; but that the truth shall be laid before them, and their understandings be rightly informed, leaving them at the same time to the free exercise of their own private judgment.

But if the teachers of religion must be laid under this restraint for the sake of the people, will it not be sufficient that they subscribe to the truth of the Scriptures only, and engage to make them the rule of their teaching? So thinks our author. He thinks the reformers ought to have been contented with "a "solemn declaration on the part of teachers and "pastors that they received the Scriptures as the "word of God, and would instruct the people out "of them only *."

This indeed would be a very comprehensive test; a test which would let in a jarring multitude, that could never be reconciled or reduced into order. It would bring together men of belief so opposite, that no real union could ever take place amongst them. It is certainly better that such men should be separated from each other and formed into distinct societies, than by a pretended comprehension and union to lay the seeds of certain confusion and discord. A society which is at variance within itself can never last long; at least it can never long enjoy peace and

* P. 16.

order, but will labour under a perpetual inward agitation and ferment. The consequence of which will be, either a total dissolution of the body, or, what is the best effect that can happen, a separation of parts so unfit, disagreeing, and ill connected.

That this is no empty theory, all ecclesiastical history will bear witness. For what else are those continual divisions and subdivisions into which Churches have been rent, but the efforts of men of different principles, when drawn together by some constrained and unnatural union, to repel each other, to separate from their opposites, and to unite with those with whom them agree?

Amongst those who profess a belief of the Scriptures, there are men who understand them very differently; and some who certainly give them a sense opposite to their real meaning, and depart very far from their true design. There are some who use them in a manner even worse and more profane than by denying their truth. For no declared infidel is so much an enemy to the Scriptures, as he who turns their truth and purity into falsehood and corruption.

For the exclusion of men like these, it is necessary to call for the teacher's assent, not only to the Scriptures in general, but to the true and genuine sense of those passages which have been thus depraved and perverted. A subscription in general terms to the truth of the Scriptures, and an engagement to teach out of them only, would let in the papists, to name no others; who pretend to teach out of the Scriptures all their corruptions, and upon their authority

to establish all their usurpations. Out of the Scriptures they would teach their transubstantiation and their seven sacraments. Out of the Scriptures they would teach their pope's supremacy and infallibility.

A subscription therefore to a specific sense of these abused parts of Scripture, seems to be a necessary consequence of an effectual separation from the Church of *Rome*.

But the heaviest charge is still behind. The author is of opinion that the Church of *England* is approaching fast towards popery. Which seems to me to be just as true, as that the island of *Great Britain* is floating towards *Rome*. Both are firmly fixed, and both remain at the same distance from *Rome* as they were two centuries ago. The charge indeed seems little consistent with the grand complaint of the book, of her obstinate adherence to those articles which were drawn up at the time of her reformation from the Church of *Rome;* and her unwillingness to quit those lines of defence which were thrown up by our great forefathers, as her surest protection against papal superstition and tyranny.

But let us hear how the author would support an accusation which seems so big with paradox. "The "principles of *Laud* and his fellows have been "espoused and pursued by their successors, in such "sort, as to give more than a suspicion to some com-"petent observers, that the Church of *England* has "been, and still is, though by degrees imperceptible "to vulgar eyes, edging back once more towards po-"pery *."

* P. 254.

The proof then of the Church of *England's* tendency towards the Church of *Rome*, is rested upon the prevalency of arminian principles amongst us. But as arminianism never had any known connection with popery, it seems to require no ordinary skill to compleat the proof through this medium. Observe however in what manner it is compleated. The doctrine of free-will is selected as the suspicious article, which witnesseth our secret affection for the Church of *Rome*. For free-will leads to the doctrine of merit, and merit introduces purgatory, saint-worship, and indulgences *. But if to maintain the freedom of the will be popery, then I will be bold to assert that both reason and Scripture are so far popish. The freedom of the will is directly opposite to the great fundamentals of popery, and favourable in the highest degree to the principles of the reformation. For with free-will are inseparably connected the freedom of reason and private judgment. Without free-will the right of private judgment, the great palladium of reformation, is rendered wholly useless, and the very pretension to it absurd. For is it to me that my superiors pretend to choose a religion for me, if in reality there be in religion no choice? Or why should I contend against the Church of *Rome*, if the only possession worth a contest be already given up? Take away this freedom, and we are prepared to receive every slavish doctrine of *Rome:* all religions are then rendered equal; or more truly, all possibility of religion is destroyed. It is strange

* P. 252, 3.

beyond measure to hear the doctrine of freedom branded as a mark of our attachment to the Church of *Rome;* and that too by a writer who is perpetually complaining of encroachments upon freedom in our Church-administration; and who desires to be thought an advocate for liberty, and the free exercise of private judgment.

If this be the thread of connection that draws us by imperceptible degrees towards the Church of *Rome*, it is indeed a thread so fine that no wonder it cannot be perceived by vulgar eyes.

What errors the Church of *Rome* may engraft upon this doctrine of free-will, I do not precisely know; nor can the Church of *England* be esteemed by any reasonable person, answerable for the abuse, because she holds the doctrine. If our holding any doctrine which they have abused be a reasonable ground of charging us with bearing an affection to them; and the doctrine must be given up, that we may create no suspicion of favouring their abuses; we must then give up every fundamental of our religion, and with them, the Gospel itself.

But may we not recriminate; and may not the Church of *England* justly suspect that they want to lead her towards *Rome*, who counsel her to destroy the barriers which were first formed to make an unalterable separation between them; and to throw down that establishment whereon she hath long stood firm against all the attacks of that encroaching power? To detach herself from the civil power, would certainly be taking one step towards the Church of *Rome*. The independency of the Church

in all respects on the civil power, is one of the main pillars of the popish usurpation. And whenever the Church of *England* can be brought to embrace this doctrine, she is so far prepared to return to the embraces of the Church of *Rome.* It was by disclaiming this doctrine, and putting herself under the protection of her natural governors, that the reformation first began. This was the first ground which *England* won from the Church of *Rome:* and if she gives it up on any pretence, she then leaves it open for the repossession of that Church; and it must be considered as the first step towards a reconciliation. She appeals to all the world therefore whether she would manifest a greater inclination to favour the pretensions of *Rome,* by defending that ground whereon she hath so long maintained herself against that usurping power, or, as she is now solicited to do, by deserting it.

They who maintain the absolute independency of religious society on the civil power, have generally in the end set up religion against the civil power. This is fully proved by the effect of this doctrine in two parties of religion opposite to each other in every other respect. The See of *Rome* on one hand hath upon this doctrine founded her claim of dominion over all temporal princes. And on the other, all the tribes of fanatics and enthusiasts have from the same doctrine hatched their impious tenets of spiritual rebellion. This is the standard round which all religious tumults have been collected; and under its influence have they been led to attempt the overthrow of all civil government. This country hath severely felt

the evil influence of this doctrine operating in both these different ways. We should be cautious therefore how we admit an opinion, under the cloak of which enemies of very different complexions have been introduced amongst us, dangerous to our liberties, and to every right which *Britons* hold most dear.

No human society can long subsist in peace, without an human power to direct it somewhere subsisting. If it throws off its obedience to the legitimate power, a lawless one will soon spring up. All therefore who wish well to the peace of mankind, will wish to see religious societies, as well as every other kind of society, maintain their obedience to those powers lawfully appointed to bear rule over all society.

A learned foreigner, contemplating the Church of *England* at a distance, hath thought it worthy of being stiled, * "the chief and leading branch of that "great community, which goes under the denomi-"nation of the reformed Church." This is a garland which the author, from a nearer view, thinks the Church of *England* hath no right to wear. He will kindly instruct her however by what means she may deserve it. For "would she indeed perfectly "atchieve the honour of being the leader and chief "all reformed Churches? The way is open." She is only required to "remove every stumbling block "out of the way of her weak (if so she will needs "call them) but conscientious fellow-Christians

* Prof. p. 21.

"nobly and generously to abolish and disavow all "impositions, all bonds, and yokes, all beggarly ele- "ments, disagreeable to the spirit and design of "Christianity: to remove all grounds of suspicion "of her hankering after *Romish* superstition, by re- "nouncing every rite, ordinance, and ceremony, "which may nourish this jealousy among the dis- "senters:" she is only required to do this, to put herself into the hands of her friends the dissenters of every denomination, that she may undergo the wholesome discipline which they shall prescribe to her; and to suffer herself to be taken to pieces by them, and new modelled according to their fancy; and then "having set this glorious example to the "other protestant Churches of *Europe*," her title to encomiums like these will be admitted; "which, "while she assumes them in her present situation, "will only pass (as we are assured) with the judi- "cious, for the meanest of all mean things, self-adu- "lation."

All impositions disagreeable to the spirit and design of Christianity it is to be hoped the Church of *England* doth disclaim; all just grounds of her hankering after *Romish* superstitions it is to be hoped she hath long ago removed; all due tenderness to weak brethren it is to be hoped she doth manifest: but if she be required to comply with every humour, to go on abolishing, disavowing, and renouncing, till jealousy itself shall be satisfied, and her very adversaries shall cry, enough; it is hard to say where she may be permitted to stop. For we know that there are some amongst us with whom the greatest part of

of her doctrines and institutions will pass for impositions, bonds, yokes, and beggarly elements; with whom every rite, ordinance, and ceremony that belongs to her, will be thought marks and remains of popery; and in whose eyes, in short, the whole Church of *England* will appear one grand stumbling block. There are some still of the same way of thinking with those early nonconformists of whom *Fuller* speaks, who "accounted every thing from "*Rome* which was not from *Geneva**." If every jealousy of this kind must be satisfied, then her principle of reformation must be, not to establish what is rational and scriptural, but what is opposite and most unlike to the Church of *Rome*. It will not be enough to separate effectually from that Church, and to stand on principles different and utterly irreconcileable with hers, but we must contrive to get at as great a distance as possible from it; and because *Rome* stands in one hemisphere, the Church of *England* must never think herself safe, never think she can sufficiently mark her aversion, never cease her flight, till she hath got to the antipodes. She must generously abolish and disavow her two sacraments, because *Rome* hath seven. Because *Rome* is superstitious, she must lay aside all regard to decency and order in her worship. Because *Rome* exercises an usurped authority destructive of religious liberty, she must disclaim all authority, though necessary for the safeguard of liberty. *Rome* is a tyrant; therefore she must have no government.

But should she even set this *glorious example*, and

* Ch. Hist. B. ix. p. 81.

strip herself as bare as the weakest brother might desire, who knows but others might be weak enough to imagine that she was herein violating all the rules of decency and propriety, and that the inward order of religion requires, and doth naturally produce a corresponding order without? Trampling on all lawful authority, neglecting all order, disfiguring her outward form, and tearing off every thing that decency may require her to put on, at the bidding of every jealous adversary: she would render herself a figure that some might admire and applaud, whilst others would be apt to suspect that she was no longer guided by the spirit of sobriety and cool reason, but that in all this they discover manifest tokens of phrenzy.

Proceeding at this rate, she would then indeed fully vindicate her claim to the title of *a leading Church;* but whether any other reformed Church might be inclined to follow her steps, would depend entirely on the opinion they should entertain of the soundness or the insanity of her conduct.

In the course of that large tract of history which the author hath brought within the subject of the Confessional, he hath thought proper to handle with great severity the characters of many eminent men, both in our own and in former times; whose whole crime seems to have been that they have embraced, and acted in support of principles different from those of our author. This is sufficient to draw down upon them his keenest resentment, from which all their abilities and all their other eminent qualities cannot save them. And indeed it hath been fashion-

able of late amongst those writers who aim at popularity, to single out from our history all who have most warmly and vigorously espoused a certain system of politics and religion, and to pour upon them a torrent of invective and contempt. The more wild and outrageous the better, because they are then more sure to be applauded as zealous friends to what they call liberty. It is not my purpose at present to enter into a discussion of the merits of these systems, but in hopes of rescuing these persecuted names from that popular fury to which they are now exposed, and that rage of abuse which is now discharged upon them from so many different quarters, I must crave leave to observe, that it ill becomes those at least who would pass themselves upon us for friends to freedom of thought, liberty of opinion, and unbounded toleration, to proscribe others for their opinions, and themselves to drag them to execution. Allow that they err. Yet they who plead for our being protected in the enjoyment of different opinions, do plead for a liberty of erring. If they likewise will grant peace to none but right and true opinions, then they likewise will tolerate only one set of opinions, since one set only can be right and true. And thus they destroy all the principles of toleration, and stir men up to mutual persecution for difference of opinions. Bigots of all kind, whatever systems they may espouse, (for even those who rail against systems have their systems) whatever names they may assume, are friends to persecution.

Whilst men who plead for liberty of opinions, a

he same time correct with an unfeeling hand all who liffer from them, they shew that they cannot mean o assert a general liberty; but liberty only for themelves and their own opinions. He who exercises n undue severity in his writings against mankind on ccount of their opinions, acts, in his way, directly gainst that freedom which he professes to defend. The pen is one instrument of torture: and in the hands of some men, a most inhuman one it is. They who indulge themselves in the wanton use of this kind of torture, give no good proof of their aversion to any other kind, if it could be employed in their own favour. For if there be *starving*, as well as *burning*, let it be remembered that there are likewise *writing* inquisitions. He who can prevail upon himself to act the executioner in the lowest of these offices, seems not ill qualified for advancement to an higher. The man who useth such faculties as he hath, to give pain to others, and who cannot endure an opposition of principles even in those whom time hath removed at the distance of some centuries from him, gives but a bad security for his moderation in the use of power were he possessed of it, or for his patience in allowing a free toleration of all different principles amongst men near him, and over whom his power should extend. It is the same spirit differently placed, which delights in private or in public censures. And the hand which can use its pen to deal out invective for the sake of opinions, would, in a proper situation, brandish it with no less alacrity in preparing against them its anathemas.

Did we but consider, that the wisest and best of

men have their errors, we should surely be inclined to shew more tenderness to the errors of others than we are apt to do; and to extend to them that indulgence, and that mercy, in short, which we must be conscious we want ourselves.

We must not conclude without saying something on the subject of a farther reformation, which it is the professed purpose of the Confessional to obtain.

There are no doubt defects in that part of the Church of *England* which is of human composition, as there must be in every work of man. Though public institutions may be settled in the compleatest manner by the wisdom of one age, yet there will be full employment for the wisdom of succeeding ages to repair their natural decays, and to make such alterations as may be necessary to suit them to times of a different complexion from those wherein they were first contrived. From the natural instability of all human affairs, time continually changing the ancient course of things; from the improvement or degeneracy of after ages; from the advancement or decay of human knowledge; from all these circumstances, the necessity of watching over all public institutions, to regulate, to repair, to adjust their various parts, clearly arises.

The reformation of errors and corruptions can never be out of season. As soon as any dangerous disorder appears, that is the season to remove it. To delay the removal of it, because men are not disposed, and the times are not ripe for a reformation, is pleading one disorder as a protection for another. And thus the danger will gain ground, and corruption,

which at its first appearance might easily have been obviated, will be suffered to spread till it reaches the vital parts, and then all remedies will come too late. But yet some disorders of a superficial and less dangerous kind had better be endured, than some remedies applied. True, the constitution is not perfectly at ease in every part, but shall we therefore deliver it up to violent and unskilful men for amendment? Bring a practitioner of approved integrity and skill, and it will with pleasure trust itself in such hands. But it will not rashly for every slight disorder, seek relief from nostrums, which if they should answer the end of removing the present complaint, bid fair at the same time to shake its whole frame, and to poison all the sources of health.

If the author of the Confessional had really in view the improvement of our ecclesiastical establishment, as I am willing to believe he had, and not its overthrow, every well wisher to his design must lament that he hath incorporated into that work arguments, and adopted principles which naturally tend to its destruction. "Protestant Churches, saith he, "ought not to employ human powers to establish "religion upon civil and political principles, nor "ought conscientious Christians to receive their re- "ligion so established." "The Church, saith "Doctor *Clark*, hath no legislative authority. We "agree to this likewise, adds the Confessional. "Bishop *Hoadley*, and before him Saint *Paul*, have "proved it beyond the possibility of an answer*."

* P. 180. 179.

The natural effect of throwing out opinions like these, is to raise a jealousy in the establishment, to render it suspicious of danger from the best advice that may come from such a quarter, and under the alarm it hath received for its safety, and whilst its whole attention is called away to watch over its own preservation, to make it forget its disorders instead of seeking a remedy for them.

For on the principles which we have been reviewing, what would the author leave the Church of *England?* She must give up all her articles, and all her creeds; she must give up her whole establishment, divorce herself from the State, and disclaim its protection. She must throw down all her bulwarks that have been raised around her, to defend her on one side from the designs of a spiritual tyrant, and on the other to secure her against the insurrections and furious assaults of those who would reduce her to a spiritual anarchy. In a word, her whole structure must be demolished to the very foundations, and no memorial remain, nor one stone be left upon another to tell posterity where once the Church of *England* stood.

Can the author be surprized if the established power should shew no inclination to treat on terms like these; and if the extravagance of such demands should wholly defeat the expectations which he may have formed from the remonstrance which he hath brought before the public? If that should be the case, I leave the author to reflect with himself how far he may be considered as accessary to a delay of that reformation which he wishes to promote; and

how far his cause, notwithstanding all his abilities, and all his good intentions at the bottom, may suffer from his management of it.

For I must beg leave to suggest one reason which does not seem to have occurred to our author, but which, as it appears to me, may have operated strongly in restraining those who are in power from setting on foot an attempt to reform: *viz.* the apprehensions they may have entertained that such an attempt, though undertaken with the best intentions, might not issue in a reformation. And who that looks back on the history of councils and conferences in past ages, will venture to say that these apprehensions are groundless? Men come together on such occasions full of zeal for their own party; opposition soon blows that zeal into a flame; passion and prejudice preside; the most clamourous and the most confident alone are heard; and the gentle voice of moderation, from which only any good can be expected, is easily overpowered. Every thing is to be feared from the violence of men's tempers. And the experience of former times may well cause an alarm in the breasts of those who are best affected to the public good, and may justify their fears of embarking the common interests, and committing their peaceful establishment once more to so rough a sea. Who that casts an eye on the dangers that probably must be encountered, will venture to say that the hazard is not greater than the reasonable prospect of gain? Or who will ensure us that we shall bring back in return a better freight than that with which we now lie safe in port?

Could we indeed hope to see a free but fair enquiry, under the conduct of men, who with a real zeal for truth unite a temper and patience which alone can bring us to it: where grievances and complaints might be modestly urged and calmly examined; where candour and cool judgment might deliberate, and equity hold the scale: every friend to our constitution would wish that it might be submitted to such a trial, because from every such trial it must come out the purer. But if there be cause to fear that, instead of a concern for the real interests of religion, men would bring only a passionate zeal for the advancement of some particular system; if instead of fair, open, and ingenuous proceedings, there should be only mutual recriminations and angry debates; if jealousies and intrigues should direct every movement, and prejudice and party-interest enter into every determination: then the probability certainly is, where such ingredients are likely to be infused, that the whole mass will come out from the trial debased, instead of being purified.

Impartial observation must determine for itself which way the issue of any fresh attempt towards a reformation of our present establishment may be likely to incline; it must determine, whether, amongst many men of good abilities and pure intentions, that might be drawn together for such an undertaking from different parties, we are not now as likely as ever to find a mixture, sufficient to do infinite mischief, of some men who, indifferent to every thing in our common Christianity but its temporal benefits, would be ready to embrace any party that should bid

them fairest; of others who, wedded to old practices, and stiff with prejudices, would be wholly inflexible to the strongest arguments that should interfere with these; of others of a narrow and illiberal way of thinking, sour, splenetic, and void of all benevolence for every one that differs from them; of many more of a different turn, men of unquiet minds, fond of novelties, ready for every change, and weary of that calm and uniform course in which all things move under old establishments; men of bold aspiring spirits, who long to figure at the head of a party, who delight in troubled times, where they may have an opportunity of producing to the world those great talents which they find stirring within them, and which render them impatient of inactivity; men, in short, who, actuated by ambition, by private interest, or party-zeal, are ready to pursue every view but that of the public good.

But if public counsels are so little likely to be right, then where are we to look for safety against corruptions; or how are we to escape from them? What has been urged is not with a design to condemn the use of public deliberation and popular enquiry whenever they may become necessary; but only by pointing out the prospect that lies before us when we look towards the way that leads to a farther reformation, to account for the backwardness of authority to comply with the demands of those who call for it.

There are times when corruption prevails so far that the distemper is visible to every eye; when every good principle is in danger of being lost, and when the cause of religion calls loudly upon every

one to whom its interests are dear to rise up for its preservation: times which admit of no delay, and which are clearly and strongly marked out for a reformation. It is then that the hearts and endeavours of all good men are thoroughly united; forgetting all their party-feuds and separate interests, they fly to remove the instant danger, and the great object of the public safety fills their whole attention.

At such a crisis, and actuated by such principles did CRANMER, RIDLEY, and LATIMER, take in hand the great work of reformation. They rescued the Church of *England* from the papal usurpation, and settled it on a plan admirable at least for their circumstances and their times, and such as hath stood the test of succeeding ages. The constitution which they established hath descended down to us; and even now, enlightened as we are apt to suppose ourselves, all impartial men must allow that its fundamental principles are worthy of admiration, and such as do honour to the great original workmen. Their honour indeed we cannot consult more effectually than by anxiously watching over their work, to repair its defects as they arise, and to bring it still nearer to perfection. If from the natural course of human things disorders have crept in, or defects have been discovered, may they soon be removed! But before we can form any reasonable hopes of meeting with success answerable to this common wish of all true friends to our constitution, men must shew a warmer zeal for the welfare of the constitution on one hand, and a temper better suited to the work of reformation on the other.

Would to God that some means could be found of bringing all to an agreement; some great principle of reconcilement, some plan of comprehension worthy the spirit of our holy religion, wide enough to take in all parties! Such a plain prophecy seems to point to; and did we all follow where the genius of our religion leads us, it would not long remain undiscovered.

In the mean time till it be brought to light, let us endeavour to be as happy as we can amidst our differences. To aim at the union of the world is too great an object. The world will have no bad appearance though it be divided into different societies, if we can only bring those societies to be united within themselves, and at peace with each other. And at least those which agree in all great and fundamental points may be at peace with each other, though they are not formed exactly according to the same model. For religious societies to quarrel with each other because they are not all of the same form, seems to be just as unreasonable as if kingdoms should make war upon each other, because their dominions are not exactly of the same shape, and the outline of their territory doth not form the same mathematical figure.

We are all alike in search of truth. Let us therefore proceed amicably and charitably in the way: abstaining from all mutual violence, and from all vain and unbecoming confidence in ourselves, which is generally the ground of it: remembering that all are equally free, and all equally interested in the great and momentous pursuit: in the course of which

though all may not tread exactly in the same steps, though all may not be happy enough to discover and constantly to pursue the most direct path, nay, though all may make frequent deviations from it, yet hoping that we are all in the main tending the right way, and that we shall all meet in the end.

It is far above our power to bring all to embrace the same opinions. But one thing is in our power, to think charitably of each other. And to this we shall be naturally inclined if we have those modest and humble sentiments of ourselves with which Christianity will inspire us. Were we all influenced by this spirit we should then differ in opinion without being divided in affection; the peace of mankind would then no longer be disturbed, but all would enjoy their own opinions in quietness. Nay our differences in other respects, whilst we agreed in charity, might even appear on some accounts desireable; giving room for the enlargement of that virtue; and bringing societies of different persuasions to appear only as different provinces in the great kingdom of charity. "We should admire that wisdom of God "which shineth in the beautiful variety of all things: "but most in the manifold and yet harmonious dis- "similitude of those ways, whereby his Church upon "earth is guided from age to age throughout all ge- "nerations of men*." Difference in sentiments would then be no more than the sounds of different strings, which would have a pleasing effect whilst charity tuned the whole, and every little discord quickly returned into that great and fundamental harmony.

* *Hooker's* Eccl. Pol. L. iii. p. 148.

I shall close all with the following prayer of the excellent and truly Christian-spirited Mr. *Hales*, with which he concludes his sermon on that peace which our Lord bequeathed to his Church: an inheritance which the Church alas hath too long delayed to take possession of! And in this prayer I shall be joined by the voices and fervent desires of all friends to true religion of whatever denomination. "When our "friends and enemies do both jointly consent to lay "open our shame, to whose judgment shall we ap- "peal, or whither shall we flie? Whither? Even to "thee, O Lord Christ, but not as to a judge: too "well we know thy sentence. Thou hast sent us "messengers of peace, but we, like *Hierusalem*, thy "ancient love, have not understood the things be- "longing to our peace. O Lord, let us know them "in this our day, and let them no longer be hidden "from our eyes. Look down, O Lord, upon thy "poor dismembered Church, rent and torn with dis- "cord, and even ready to sink. Why should the "*neutral* or *atheist* any longer confirm himself in "his irreligion by reasons drawn from our dissen- "tions? Or why should any greedy minded world- "ling prophecy unto himself the ruins of thy sanc- "tuary, or hope one day to dip his foot in the blood "of thy Church? We will hope, O Lord, (for what "hinders?) that notwithstanding all supposed impos- "sibilities, thou wilt one day in mercy look down upon "thy Sion, and grant a gracious interview of friends "so long divided. Thou that wroughtest that GREAT "RECONCILIATION between God and man, is thine "arm waxen shorter? Was it possible to reconcile

" God to man? To reconcile man to man is it im-
" possible? Be with those we beseech thee, to whom
" the prosecution of Church-controversies is com-
" mitted; and like a good *Lazarus* drop one cooling
" drop into their tongues, and pens, too too much ex-
" asperated each against other. And if it be thy
" determinate will, that this *abomination of desolation*
" *standing where it ought not*, continue unto the end,
" accomplish thou with speed the number of thine
" elect, and hasten the coming of thy Son our Sa-
" viour, that he may himself in person sit, and judge,
" and give an end to our controversies, since it stands
" not with any human possibility. Direct thy Church,
" O Lord, in all her petitions for peace; teach her
" wherein her peace consists, and warn her from the
" world, and bring her home to thee; that all those
" that love thy peace, may at last have the reward
" of the sons of peace, and reign with Thee, in thy
" kingdom of peace for ever!"

OF A TEST-LAW.

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CHAP. I.

OF THE ORIGIN AND USE OF A TEST-LAW.

"O MAGNA VIS VERITATIS, quæ contra hominum ingenia, calliditatem, sollertiam, contraque fictas omnium insidias, facile se, per se, ipsa defendat *!" Thus breaks out the illustrious Roman, transported by a fit of philosophical enthusiasm. This *force of truth* never shone with greater lustre than on the present occasion: where by the assistance of a few plain and simple principles, taken from the nature of man, and the ends of political society, we have cleared up a chaos of controversy; proved the justice and necessity of an alliance BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE; deduced the mutual conditions on which it was formed; and shewn them to have an amazing agreement with our own happy establishment. What remains is to vindicate the equity of what our constitution calls a Test-Law;

* Cicer. Orat. pro cœlio.

which we are now enabled to do *on the very principles of our adversaries themselves.*

The necessity of a NATIONAL RELIGION was, till of late, one of the most uncontested principles in politics. The practice of all nations and the opinion of all sages concurred to give it credit. To collect what the best and wisest authors of antiquity (where the consent was universal) have said in favour of a *national Religion*, would be endless. We shall content ourselves with the opinion of two modern writers in its favour: who, being professed advocates for the common rights of mankind, will, we suppose, be favourably heard. "This" (says one of them) "was ancient policy," [*viz.* the union of the civil and religious interests] "and hence it is necessary that the people should have a public leading "in Religion. For to deny the magistrate a worship, or take away a NATIONAL CHURCH, is as "mere enthusiasm as the notion which sets up persecution*." "Toward keeping mankind in order" (says the other) "it is necessary there should "be some Religion professed and even ESTABLISHED †." Indeed not many, even now, will directly deny this necessity; though, by employing such arguments against a *Test* as would destroy an *establishment*, they open a way, though a little more obliquely, to this conclusion. But it is that unavoidable consequence springing from an *established Church* in every place where there are diversities

* Shaftsbury's Characteristicks, v. i. Tr. 1. § 2.

† Woolaston's Relig. of Nature Delin. p. 124.

of religions, a TEST-LAW, which makes the judgment of so many revolt; and chuse rather to give up an *establishment* than receive it with this tyrannical attendant. Although it appears, at first view, so evident that, when a Church and State are in UNION, he who cannot give security for his behaviour to *both*, may with as much reason be deprived of some civil advantages, as he, who, before the UNION, could not give security to the state alone.

The matter, therefore, of greatest concern remains to be enquired into; namely, how *the equity of a Test-Law* can be deduced from those principles of the law of nature and nations, by which we have so clearly proved *the justice of an established Religion.* But here, as before, in the case of an *establishment*, it is not to my purpose to defend this or that national form or mode of *Test;* for it may so happen, (I wish I could say it has not happened) that the very worst may be employed, where the dangers are pressing, or the passions of men inflamed; but to defend a TEST-LAW in general. By which I understand *some sufficient proof or evidence required from those admitted into the administration of public affairs, that they are Members of the Religion established by law.*

And, in shewing the justice, equity, and necessity of a *Test-Law*, I shall proceed in the manner in which I sat out, and have hitherto observed, of deducing all my conclusions, in a continued chain of reasoning, from the simple principles at first laid down.

Hitherto I have considered *that alliance*, between

Church and State, which produces an *establishment*, only under its more simple form, *i. e.* where there is but *one Religion* in the State. But it may so happen, that, either at the time of convention, or afterwards, there may be *more than one.*

I. If there be more than one at the time of convention, the State allies itself with the LARGEST of these religious societies. It is *fit* the State should do so, because the larger the religious society is, where there is an equality in other points, the better enabled it will be to answer the ends of an *alliance*; as having the greatest number under its influence. It is *scarce possible* it should do otherwise; because the two societies being composed of the same individuals, the greatly prevailing Religion must have a majority of its members in the assemblies of State; who will naturally prefer their own Religion to any other.

With this Religion is the *alliance* made; and a full TOLERATION given the rest, in *esse*, or in *posse* *.

* No man ever carried *human liberty* to the ridiculous excess, in which we find it in the writings of J. J. Rousseau, the celebrated citizen of Geneva. Yet, with the appearance of the like extravagant caprice in the other extreme, he deprives men of that most precious branch of their liberty, the worshipping God according to their conscience. "As to religions once "*established*, or *tolerated* in a state, I think it" (says he, in a Letter to the *Archbishop* of Paris) "unjust and barbarous to "destroy them by violence; and that the sovereign hurts himself in maltreating the followers of them. There is a great difference between men's embracing a new religion, and living and continuing in that in which they were born. The *first* "*only are punishable.* The civil power should neither suffer

Yet under the restriction of a TEST-LAW, to keep them from hurting that which is *established.*

" diversities of opinion to be new planted, neither should it " proscribe those which have already taken root. *For a son* " *is never in the wrong for following the religion of his father;* " and the *public peace requires* that there should be no perse- " cution."—*Lettre a M. De Beaumont, L'Archeveque de Paris,* p. 86. I have given the original in another place.

This one might expect from a man of paradox: but, to find so sage an advocate for liberty as M. de Montesquieu speaking in the same strain, appears at first sight, very unaccountable.— " See then" (says he) " the fundamental principle of civil laws " with regard to religion. When the civil power is the master " whether it will receive a *new religion* into the state, or whe- " ther it will not, it should not receive it. When it hath al- " ready gotten footing in the state, it should be *tolerated.*"—— Voici donc le principe fondamental des loix politiques en fait de religion. Quand on est maître de recevoir dans un état une nouvelle religion, ou de ne pas recevoir, il ne faut pas l' y établir; quand elle y est établie, il faut la tolérer.—*De l'Esprit des Loix.* L. 25. c. x.

This decision of these two philosophic legists appears to be as contradictory to their own general principle, as it is absurd and unjust in itself. The only way I know, of accounting for it, is to suppose (and I believe I do small injury to truth in supposing) that both of them consider RELIGION as a mere ENGINE OF STATE; an useful one indeed, when rightly applied; but very mischievous when not conducted by as able politicians as themselves. Suppose this; and then, as discordant as their decision is to their *civil principles* of liberty, it is very consonant to their *religious principles* of an *engine of state.* For if religion be only thus to be considered, any mode of it will serve the turn: more than one may be too much, and occasion civil disorders: therefore more than one ought not to be admitted. But if several have already taken root, they are to be *tolerated* and left in peace, for the very same reason: because the attempt to eradicate them

From this account of the origin of a *Test-Law* may be deduced the following COROLLARIES concerning an *establishment*. For,

1. From hence may be seen the reason why the *Episcopal* is the *Established* Church, in ENGLAND; and the *Presbyterian*, the *Established* Church in SCOTLAND; and the equity of that CONVERSION; which our adversaries have represented as so egregious an absurdity, in point of right, that it is sufficient to discredit the reason of all *establishments*.

2. Hence too may be seen the truth of what was before observed, concerning the DURATION of this *alliance:* that it is PERPETUAL, but NOT IRREVOCABLE, *i. e.* It subsists just so long as the Church, thereby established, maintains its superiority of extent: which when it loses to any considerable degree, the *alliance* becomes void. For the united Church being then no longer able to perform in the convention, which is formed on reciprocal conditions, the State becomes disengaged. And a NEW ALLIANCE

might be attended with the same civil mischief which a new introduction of them would produce.

But neither of these celebrated writers seemed to consider, that though THEY considered *religion as a mere engine of state*, yet that RELIGIONISTS thought otherwise, and esteemed it of divine original; and that consequently, it was matter of CONSCIENCE to *believers* to worship God according to that mode which they judged most acceptable to him. Now to restrain such in the exercise of what they deem their chief duty, is one of the greatest violations of the NATURAL RIGHTS of mankind: yet these two ingenious men openly profess, nay boast, that the defence and preservation of THESE RIGHTS was their grand and principal end of all their learned labours.

is, of course, contracted with the now prevailing Church, for the reasons which made the *old.* Thus, formerly, the *alliance* between the PAGAN CHURCH and empire of Rome was dissolved; and the CHRISTIAN established in its place: and, of late, the *alliance* between the POPISH CHURCH and the kingdom of England was broken; and another made with the PROTESTANT, in its stead.

II. If these different Religions spring up *after* the alliance hath been formed; then, whenever they become considerable, a *Test-Law* is necessary, for the security of the *established Church.* For amongst diversities of religions, where every one thinks itself the *only true*, or, at least, the *most pure*, every one aims at rising on the ruins of the rest *: which it calls, *bringing into conformity* with itself. The means of doing this when reason fails, which is rarely at hand, and more rarely heard when it is, will be by getting into the public administration, and applying the civil power to the work. But when one of these religions is *established*, and the rest under a *toleration*, then envy at the advantages of the *establishment* will join the *tolerated* Churches in confederacy against it, and unite them in one common quarrel to disturb its peace. In this imminent danger, the *allied* Church calls upon the State, for the

* See an historical narration of the conduct of the early *Puritans* to make their discipline national in spight of the civil magistrate, in a curious account printed 1593, and intitled, *Dangerous Positions and Proceedings published and practised within this Island of Brytaine, under pretence of Reformation and for the Presbiterial Discipline.*

performance of its contract; who thereupon gives her a TEST-LAW for her security: whereby an entrance into the administration (the only way, the threatened mischief may be effected) is shut to all but members of the *established* Church. So when the *sectaries*, in the time of Charles the First, had, for want of this law, overturned the *Church* of *England;* as soon as the government was restored, and replaced on its old foundations, the legislature thought fit to make a *Test-Law* *, (though with the latest; and what was worse, with the narrowest views) to prevent a repetition of the like disasters. A law, on its first enacting, confessed, on all hands, so *equitable* as well as *expedient*, that the celebrated Lord Digby, then Earl of Bristol, eminent for his parts of speculation and business, though at that time a *Papist*, largely acknowledged the high wisdom of it, by arguments of great weight and validity. When the bill was first brought into the house of lords, the noble earl delivered his mind to this effect:—"He declared himself a Catholic of the "*Church*, not of the *court*, of Rome; and therefore "spoke as a faithful member of a protestant parlia-"ment. The bill, (he observed) was brought up "from the house of commons, the representatives "of the people, and consequently the best judges "of the temper of the nation. A bill as full of "moderation towards catholics, as of prudence and "security towards the religion of the state: all the "particulars of it being reduced to this one intent,

* In 1671.

" NATURAL TO ALL SOCIETIES OF MEN, of hin-
" dering a lesser opposite party from going too
" strong for the greater and more considerable one.
" And in this just way of prevention (says he) is
" not the moderation of the house of commons to
" be admired, that they have restrained it to this
" sole point of DEBARRING THEIR ADVERSARIES
" FROM OFFICES AND PLACES? However, the sen-
" timents of a catholic of the Church of Rome may
" oblige me, upon scruple of conscience, in some
" particulars of this bill, to give my negative to it,
" when it comes to passing; yet as member of a pro-
" testant parliament my advice prudentially cannot
" but go along with the main scope of it."

Thus a TEST-LAW took its birth; whether *at*, or *after* the time of *alliance*. And from this moment the justice and equity of an ESTABLISHED CHURCH began to be called in question. It will be therefore proper, in the next place, to shew that the State is under the highest obligations to provide the Church with this security.

CHAP. II.

OF THE NECESSITY AND EQUITY OF A TEST-LAW.

WE have now proved the equity and necessity of the *alliance between Church and State;* and have therefore a right to use it as a *principle,* in our further inquiry.

I. By this *alliance,* the State promised to protect the Church, and to secure it from the injuries and insults of its enemies. An attempt, in the members of any other Church, to get into the administration, in order to deprive the Established Church of the covenanted rights which it enjoys, either by sharing those advantages with it, or by drawing them from it, is highly injurious. And we have shewn, that where there are diversities of religions, this attempt will be always making: the State then must defeat that attempt: but there is no other way of doing it, than by hindering its enemies from entering into the administration: but they can be hindered only by a TEST-LAW.

II. Again, this promise of protection is of such a nature as is, on no pretence, to be dispensed with. For, protection was not only a condition of alliance, but, on the Church's part, the *sole* condition of it. We have shewn, that all other benefits and advan—

tages are *foreign* to a Church, *as such*, and *improper* for it. Now the not performing the *sole condition* of a convention, virtually destroys and dissolves it: especially if we consider that this sole condition is both *necessary* and *just: necessary*, as a free convention must have mutual conditions; and, but for *this*, one side would be without any: *just*, as the convention itself is founded on the laws of nature and nations; and *this* the only condition which suits the nature of a Church to demand or expect.

III. But again, the Church in order to enable the State to perform this *sole condition*, the affording of protection, consented to give up its supremacy, and independency, to the civil sovereign. Whence it follows, that whenever the enemies of the Established Church get into the magistrature, to which, as we said, the supremacy of the Church is transferred by the alliance, she becomes a prey, and lies entirely at their mercy: being now, by the loss of her supremacy, in no condition for defence, as she was in her natural state, unprotected and independent. So that not to secure her by a *Test-Law* is betraying, and delivering her up bound, to her enemies.

Thus it is seen what obligation the State lies under, from compact, of providing a *Test-Law* for the security of the *Established Church:* and, by inforcing this obligation, from the last motive, we have obviated the only plausible objection that could be made to our account of this *condition of protection:* which is, "That if an union between Church and "State be, as we have represented it, so necessary "for the well being of civil society, how happened

" it, that that universal charity to mankind, which is " the characteristic of true religion, could not engage " the Church to enter into union, without standing " upon terms of advantage to itself: especially such " as necessarily introduce a *Test-Law*, so full of in- " convenience to the subject?"

This objection, though already obviated, shall be now considered more particularly. 1. We say, that religion constituting a political society, and it being of the nature of political society to seek support from alliances, the Church was in a proper and reasonable pursuit, when it aimed at its own advantage in this convention. 2. We say, that as man, when he entered into civil society, necessarily parted from some of his natural rights, so the Church, when it entered into *alliance* with the State, did the same. The right she departed from was her *independency;* which she transferred to the civil sovereign: for no alliance can be made between two such independent societies, till *one* hath given up its *independency* to the other; and this, the law of nations says shall be the less powerful society: which, in the present case, is the Church. Now, as man received an equivalent for the natural rights he gave up; so, in all reason, should the Church. 3. But lastly, we say, the Church could not enter into alliance, and not stipulate for this condition, without concurring to its own destruction. It hath been shewn just before, that the *dependency* of the Church on the State necessarily follows an alliance; and, in the preceding paragraph, that, where a Church, in this condition, hath enemies in the magistrature, and without means of

defence in herself, she must expect the most fatal issue. Now the great law of self-preservation obliges her to provide against them. But no other provision can be made than engaging the protection of the State. Therefore we conclude, that the Church's stipulating for that protection was not only what she in justice *might*, but what in duty she was *obliged* to do.

Here we might have concluded our inquiry; having, in a continued chain of reasoning, drawn from the most simple principles, explained the original and nature of civil and religious society; and, from thence, deduced our main conclusions, the NECESSITY OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH, and the JUSTICE AND EQUITY OF A TEST-LAW.

But, that nothing may be wanting to put so important a matter out of controversy,

II.

I proceed, in the next place, to shew, that had no promise of protection been made, yet the State would have lain under the most indispensible necessity of providing a *Test-Law* for *its own* security. A celebrated writer, who, as far as *religion* hath to do with *politics*, was no bad judge, either of its essential or accidental effects, speaking of a TEST-LAW scruples not to pronounce, "That no man "ought to be trusted with any share of power under "a government, who must, to act consistently with "himself, endeavour the destruction of that very "government*."

* Lord Bolingbroke's *Letter to Sir W. Windham.*

It hath been observed, that wherever there are diversities of religion, each sect, believing its own the true, strives to advance itself on the ruins of the rest. If this doth not succeed by force of argument, these partisans are very apt to have recourse to the coactive power of the State: which is done by introducing a party into the public administration. And they have always had art enough to make the State believe, that its interests were much concerned in the success of their religious quarrels. What persecutions, rebellions, revolutions, loss of civil and religious liberty, these intestine struggles between sects have occasioned, is well known even to such as are least acquainted with the history of mankind.

To prevent these mischiefs was (as we have shewn) one great motive for the State's seeking *alliance* with the Church. For the obvious remedy was to *establish* one Church, and give a *free toleration* to the rest. But if, in administering this cure, the State should stop short, and not proceed to exclude the *tolerated* religions from entering into the public administration, such imperfect application of the remedy would infinitely heighten the distemper. For, before the *alliance*, it was only a mistaken aim in propagating truth, which occasioned these disorders: but now, the zeal for opinions would be out of measure inflamed by envy and emulation; which the temporal advantages, enjoyed by the *Established* Church, exclusive of the rest, will always occasion. And what mischiefs this would produce, had every sect a free entry into the administration, the reader may easily conceive.

Now this being the inevitable fate of every government where religion is *established*, with diversity of sects, and without a Test-Law; and an *established religion* being proved indispensably necessary to society; we must conclude, that the State has the most pressing reasons to provide a Test-Law, as well for its own security, as for the discharge of its contract with the Church *.

If it be said, that would men content themselves, as, in reason, they ought, with enjoying their own opinions, without obtruding them upon others, these evils, which require the remedy of a *Test-Law*, would never happen. This is very true: and so would men but observe the rule of right in general, there would be no need to have recourse to civil society to rectify the evils of a state of nature.

* The equal conduct of the best and greatest of our monarchs, in his very different stations of Prince of Orange, and King of England, will do great credit to this reasoning. When King James, a *Papist*, demanded of his son-in-law, with whom he was then on good terms, his approbation of A TOLERATION and ABOLITION OF THE TEST. The Statholder readily concurred with the scheme of a *toleration*, but utterly condemned an *abolition of the test*. When afterward, he became king of a free people, the *protestant* dissenters, likewise, in their turn demanded both. His conduct was uniformly the same. He gave them a *toleration*, but would not consent to abolish the *test*.

CHAP. III.

IN WHICH THE OBJECTIONS TO THE EQUITY AND EXPEDIENCY OF A TEST-LAW ARE CONSIDERED.

HAVING gone thus far, the argument leads us to give some good account of the principal *objections* against the EQUITY of a *Test-Law:* the way being now cleared to a ready and satisfactory answer.

I. The first *objection*, the sheet-anchor of the cause, is this, "That every qualified subject having a right "to a share of the honours and profits in the dis-"posal of the magistrate, the debarring him from "these advantages, for matters of opinion, is a vio-"lation of the common rights of subjects." This goes directly to the essentials; and attacks the very JUSTICE and EQUITY of a *Test-Law:* the other objections being only against the use and expediency of it.

If, then it can be shewn, that our adversaries have here taken for granted a thing, which, though by reason of mistaken notions of government, was never in dispute, is yet utterly false; we shall quite overthrow all that ostentatious declamation by which they have endeavoured to discredit a *Test-Law.* I say, therefore that this pretended *right of every qualified subject to a share of the honours and profits in the dis-*

posal of the supreme magistrate is altogether groundless and visionary.

Let it be remembered, that, in the third chapter of the first book, it hath been proved at large, that REWARD IS NOT ONE OF THE SANCTIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY: the only claim which subjects have on the magistrate, for *obedience*, being *protection*.

Now the consequence of this is, that all places of honour and profit, in the magistrate's disposal, are not there in the nature of a TRUST; to be claimed, and equally shared by the subject: but of the nature of PREROGATIVE; which he may dispose of at pleasure, without being further accountable, than for having such places *ably* supplied.

All right of claim then being absolutely at an end; and consequently, all *injustice*, in excluding at pleasure; we might here finish our discourse, having taken from our adversaries the great *palladium* of their cause.

But secondly, should we for argument's sake suppose, what is absolutely false, that the subject had a *right*; yet still it will be found to be amongst those rights, which are not *claimable*. For let it be again remembered, that in speaking of moral *duties*, we observed, they were of two kinds, of *perfect* and *imperfect* obligation: and therefore answerable to these, must needs be the *rights* arising from them. Those which arise from the duties of perfect obligation being *claimable*; and those from imperfect obligation, not so. But an equal dispensation of public honours and profits can never be thought other than in the class of duties of imperfect obligation, such as,

in private men, *gratitude, hospitality, charity;* and consequently the right to them cannot be *claimable*, even when abusively withheld.

But, to leave nothing unanswered, let us, for a moment, wave these advantages; and, for argument sake, as before, suppose this COMMON RIGHT OF SUBJECTS; and then the proposition will come to this,

That to exclude a citizen from his civil rights, for matters of opinion, is a violation of the common rights of subjects.

This proposition, we see, is founded on these two others, 1. *That opinions cannot be punished, because punishment can be inflicted only for matters in which the will is concerned, and the will is not concerned in matters of opinion.* 2. *If opinions could be punished, they are not within the civil magistrate's jurisdiction; his care extending only to bodies.* Now if it can be made appear that these two latter propositions give no support to the former, we must conclude that the *objection* is, even in this sense, vain and groundless.

To the first proposition I reply, that it is indeed universally true; but not at all to the purpose: the disqualification, by a Test-Law, being no PUNISHMENT in the true sense of the word, which is that implied in the proposition. To the second, I say, that it is not universally true: for that when opinions do, directly and necessarily, affect the peace of society, they then come within the magistrate's jurisdiction; and that this exception takes place in the case before us; the opinions, which a Test-Law

makes matter of disqualification, directly and necessarily affecting the peace of civil society.

1. The first assertion is thus proved; evil of all kinds, and whencesoever proceeding, man hath, by nature, a right to repel. Evil which proceeds not from the will is called a *mischief;* and may be simply repelled; and this repulsion is called RESTRAINT: evil which proceeds from the will is called a *crime;* and may, not only, be repelled, but have additional pain, more than sufficient for the restraint, inflicted on the author; and this repulsion is properly called PUNISHMENT. That punishment should not be inflicted for a mischief, that is, for an evil in which the will is not concerned, is plain from hence; the *end* of that additional pain, more than is sufficient for restraint, called punishment, being *a satisfaction to justice,* for *the reformation of the offender,* and for *example to deter others;* it would be absolutely unjust to inflict *avenging* pain for what was involuntarily committed: and altogether impertinent to attempt to deter, by *example,* from involuntary actions. The utmost therefore that can be inflicted for a *mischief* is *restraint;* that is, just so much pain, when the mischief proceeds from a rational agent, as is necessary to repel that mischief. Thus is *restraint* properly annexed to *mischief;* and *punishment* to *crimes.*

Such distinct and precise *moral modes,* one would think, it was not very easy to confound. And yet they have been confounded; so as utterly to embarrass all our reasonings on this subject. It is true, while they are considered in their application to irra-

tional and rational agents, the difference is seldom mistaken; but when they are both applied to rational agents, then it is that men begin to confound the ideas, and lose sight of all these marks of distinction. For 1. *Pain* being an inseparable *idea* in punishment; and every *restraint* of a rational agent having some degree of pain attending it; this idea common to both, led them to think the two terms, in each of which it was found, were synonymous. 2. *Restraint* of a rational agent being defined to be an infliction of *just so much* pain as is necessary to repel the evil, and *punishment* to be an infliction of *more* than is necessary for that purpose, men considered the difference as only from less to more: and applying *this* to *mischiefs* and *crimes* set together in comparison, instead of applying it to *mischiefs* compared with *mischiefs*, and *crimes* with *crimes*, even this small difference was lost and confounded. Because, where the *mischief* is vastly more obstinate, and difficult to eradicate than the *crime*, there the pain attending the mischief must be more and greater than that attending crime. The use and solidity of our distinction may be illustrated by this example. There are four sects whose principles, our adversaries will not deny, ought to be *restrained*.—The ATHEIST, the ENGLISH PAPIST, the GERMAN ANABAPTIST, and the QUAKER, all hold opinions pernicious to civil society. But these having different degrees of malignity must have different degrees of restraint. The ATHEIST, who is incapable of giving security for his behaviour in community, and whose principles directly overthrow the very foundation on

which it is built, should certainly be banished all civil government. The ENGLISH PAPIST, who owns a foreign ecclesiastical power superior to all temporal dominion, should not be tolerated in any sovereign state. The GERMAN ANABAPTIST, who holds capital punishment to be sinful, should be debarred the magistracy: and the QUAKER, who believes even defensive war to be unchristian, should be excluded, in states upon the continent, the common liberty of residing in frontier places. Now these different degrees of pain do not make one a *punishment*, and the other, a *restraint*; but, being every one proportioned to the malignity of their respective evils, and no more than what is just necessary to repel them, they are all equally *mere restraints*. But now extend these pains and penalties, to the burning of the Atheist; to the banishment of the Papist; to the denying of civil protection to the Anabaptist; and of religious toleration to the Quaker; and then, notwithstanding the same diversity of degrees, they are all *punishments*, and none *mere restraints*. Because more pain is, in every case, inflicted than is necessary to repel the respective evils.

I have only then to shew, that the pain inflicted by a Test-Law, is no more than just necessary to repel *the evil of diversity of sects when got into the administration*: and, consequently, that it is a *restraint only*. To make this evident, let us suppose a person able, in one certain place only, to do mischief; and that he is disposed to do it: it is plain, there are no other means of repelling this evil than

by debarring his entrance into *that* place. These means then are necessary: but, what is necessary to repel an evil is *a restraint only*. But were this pain extended; and, because the person can do mischief in one place, he is debarred entrance into ten, then the *pain* becomes a *punishment*, because more than necessary for repelling the evil. This is exactly the case in hand. Diversity of sects can do mischief only by getting into the administration: therefore to keep them out, is, for the reasons above, only a *restraint*. But, were their civil incapacity extended further, then it would become a *punishment*. By the Test-Law, it is not extended further; therefore it is no punishment, but a restraint only.

Had the force of this reasoning been duly considered, it might I apprehend, have soon decided a late famous question, yet it seems, undetermined.

By the custom or constitution of one of our great incorporated bodies, some or other of its members are annually called upon to discharge a very important, though very onerous office. Now, if such a one happens to be a *separatist* he takes the advantage of the *Test-Law*, which, under great penalties, forbids his entrance on this office, till he has given certain marks of his conformity to the established worship; to give which, he makes matter of conscience; and from which, he is at liberty to dissent by the act of *toleration*. This renders him incapable of serving. But it having been long the custom for members, thus appointed, to this important service, to purchase, of the body, an exemption, at a large

price, by way of fine, it was thought reasonable to demand it of the *non-conformist* who cannot serve, as well as of the *conformist*, who will not. And when it was urged, that this fine could only be equitably inflicted on those who willingly declined a permitted office; not on those, upon whom the law had laid an embargo, to stop their entrance into it; it was thought sufficient to reply, "That the law, of "which the *non-conformist* would thus avail himself, "was never intended for his advantage or emolu- "ment; for which, it would be frequently brought "to serve, if this plea were admitted." The question therefore to be decided was this, "Whether he "who *cannot* serve, is by law, equally obnoxious to "the fine, with him who *will not?*"

Now, I humbly conceive that this question can be then only resolved with justice and precision, when the TRUE NATURE of a *Test-Law* has been previously settled. I have laid down the principles which lead to it; and on them I argue thus *,

Were this law ordained to *draw* or to *drive* dissenters into the national *Church*, the prohibition from entering on certain civil offices was without doubt intended for a PUNISHMENT. But if the law were ordained, only to keep dissenters out of those stations in the *State*, in which, by injuring the establishment, they would violate the peace of society, then certainly the prohibition was intended for a RESTRAINT only; and becomes a *punishment* but by accident.

* The following argument was first printed in the spring of the year 1762.

Now, were it intended for a PUNISHMENT, the customary *fine*, on those who do not serve, would be most LEGAL: and, in such case, the reasoning of the body against the non-complying members, "that "the legislature, by this law, never intended the dis-"senter should receive civil benefit or emolument," will not be without its force; for a *benefit* defeats the end of *such a law*. But if the *test* impose a RESTRAINT only, and it become a *punishment* but by accident, it may, without the least evil influence on that law, become a *benefit* likewise by accident. Nay, to hinder this fair chance would be cruel and unjust: for if, by the inevitable condition of human things, particulars receive *damage* by a law which respects the general; and which never had such damage in its intention; it is but fit, they should have the like chance of a *benefit*, though equally without the intention of the legislature.

Indeed, where the unprovided for, or unthought of, consequence tends naturally to defeat the purpose of the law, there the authorised interpreters of it will interpose, and declare the advantage taken to be against the law; or, which amounts to the same thing, unsupported by it. But an accidental *benefit* which arises from a simple restraint, seems better calculated to effect the end of the Test-Law than a *damage*; since the first tends to keep the enemies of the Church from office in the State; the second is a temptation to them to get in, by the violation of conscience. The *benefit* is indeed liable to abuse, (and what is there in civil matters which is not?) yet this abuse does not affect the purpose of

the law, which is to keep sectaries out of civil offices.

But let it not be supposed that any thing here said in favour of the honest sectarian member, is meant to include the OCCASIONAL CONFORMIST. For if such a one can think, that he may, with his conscience unhurt, *conform* for the sake of *lucrative* employments, he should never be permitted, on pretence of conscience, to plead the restrictive law, in order to evade those which are *onerous*. And here let me further observe, that the *dissenters* will not seem to be in the properest disposition to claim the advantage of the distinction here laid down in their favour, till they have a little reformed their ideas of a *Test-Law*. For they have generally, I think, in order to throw the greater odium on it, represented the embargo which it lays upon them, as a thing inflicted for a PUNISHMENT. Now it hath been shewn, that if our lawgivers intended a *punishment*, it would defeat their whole purpose to connive at its becoming an *accidental benefit*.

But now it appears, both from reason and fact, that the TEST is a *restrictive* and not a *penal law* in the proper meaning of these terms. For,

1. If a law may be understood in two senses, one of which supports its equity, while the other betrays its injustice, reason directs us to adopt the first. To *punish* sectaries, in order to bring them over to the national religion, is plainly iniquitous; but to *restrain* sectaries from injuring the national religion is evidently just. Therefore, had the intention of the legislature in this case been doubtful, yet a *general*

law of a free people would admit of no other interpretation than this latter.

2. But the intention of the legislature is not doubtful. This reasoning is supported by fact. When the law was made, the national Church was thought to be in danger equally from *Protestant* and *Popish* sectaries. In the early days indeed, of the Established Church, the government had endeavoured to bring both into submission to it, and many PENAL LAWS were enacted for this purpose. But by that time the *test* became a law, so visionary and unjust a project had been long in discredit: and government was now content to confine its care to the *protection*, rather than to the *extension*, of the national Church. Had this latter point been their aim, it was to be effected only by a vigorous execution of the old *penal laws* then, and still in being, though long kept dormant. The Test added no force to those, but on the contrary greatly relaxed their activity, by disposing government to place their chief confidence, and seek their only remedy for disorders, in this new made law.

And now the reader may see the strength of that objection made to the *Test-Law*, as at present inforced to affect the interests of Protestant dissenters, *viz.* "That its original and direct intention was *to* "oppose to the machinations of Popery; and there- "fore, that the other, being included only by acci- "dent, may very reasonably be overlooked." But if the idea here given of the *Test-Law* be right, it is apparent that the general, though perhaps not the immediate, purpose of the legislature in framing it

was to provide, (and this, in behalf of the State) for the safety of the national Church, from what quarter soever the danger might arise. At one season it might arise from *popery;* at another, from *puritanism;* but the various civil mischiefs, consequent on religious quarrels, were to be repelled as they sprung up with equal vigilance and vigour. But let no one imagine, that a *comparison of demerit* is here insinuated between popery and puritanism. As religions, they are no more to be set together, in the opinion of an English episcopalian, than a body irrecoverably corrupted, and one but slightly tainted. Yet with regard to the civil mischiefs which religious rancour, when let loose, may occasion, we have constantly experienced, that the *slightest* matters often produce as great, as the most *weighty.* And the surplice and the cross in baptism have set fellow-citizens against each other with as much inveterate hate, as the tyrannic claim of the pope's supremacy, or the idolatrous worship of dead men deified. However, the nature and genius of the two sects is sufficiently discriminated by law, in *tolerating* the one, and only *conniving* at the other, under suspended penal statutes; but still on the same *civil principles:* these *sanguinary laws,* as they are called, not being directed against the religious errors of the CHURCH, but the political usurpations of the COURT OF ROME; which when these laws were made, excited men by papal edicts, to parricide and rebellion; and will not yet suffer its subjects to give any reasonable security to the *civil sovereign.* For, with *religious errors, as such,* the State hath no concern: they are

the *civil mischiefs* with which civil society hath to do; mischiefs arising from religious quarrels, where the two parties are nearly equal in power (as, I suppose, protestant sects, which differ only in smaller matters, would soon be, under a *toleration* without a *Test-Law*) and are set upon combating one another's ERRORS.

But let me not be misunderstood, as if from what hath been here said, in behalf of *toleration*, I would insinuate, that this law hath altered the nature of the crime going under the name of SCHISM; which is an unnecessary separation from the national Church; or because the law hath taken away all civil punishment from Protestant Dissenters, some of whom may possibly so offend, that therefore *schism* is become an innocent, and an empty name. And that the law in favour of SCHISMATICS, like that in favour of WITCHES, has dissipated only a frightful phantom. It is true, that in both cases, the legislature acted for the same general end, the *restraint of injustice*; but it was on very different principles: in the first case, they took off civil punishment from a *real crime*, not cognizable by a human judicatory: and in the latter, they removed an opprobrium from the statute book, which expressed a sanguinary resentment agaist an *imaginary one*.

SCHISM, or a causeless separation of a member from the national Church, is a crime which, on all the principles of law and reason, deserves condign punishment. But of *separation*, whether with or without cause, there is no adequate judge, but that Power who is able to distinguish between a well, and

an ill informed conscience. Very justly therefore did this free government remit the question to an omniscient tribunal. But, in so doing, it did not mitigate, but, by its indulgence, rather aggravate the guilt, wherever it shall be found, hereafter, to exist. And how wisely so doubtful a point was remitted thither, we may, in part, see from the answer of the *foreign divines*, to whose judgment, at the beginning of our Reformation (when the quarrel between the puritans and churchmen, about habits and ceremonies, ran high) both parties agreed to submit. Those prudent and honest men, when thus appealed unto, gave it as their deliberate judgment, "THAT THE "PURITANS OUGHT TO CONFORM, RATHER THAN "MAKE A SCHISM: AND THAT THE CHURCHMEN "OUGHT TO INDULGE THE OTHERS' SCRUPLES, "RATHER THAN HAZARD ONE." A wise decision, and reaching much further, in religious matters, than to the single case, to which it was applied. But to return.

2. We come now to our second assertion, and say, that *it doth not hold universally true, that the civil magistrate hath nothing to do with opinions:* for, that when they directly and necessarily affect the peace of civil society the coertion of them is in his jurisdiction: and this even our adversaries themselves confess. Which would they uniformly hold, we should take on their words, and proceed. But though they allow this maxim in speculation, yet they can rarely be brought to see its justice or fitness in practice. Which would tempt one to think, that the evident mischiefs arising from some opinions had forced this

general confession from them, in spite of principle; the prejudice of which returning in particular instances, drew them back into their old conclusion, that reason and truth were violated by the magistrate's interfering. I will in charity rather suppose this to be the case, than that a spirit of licentiousness makes them retract in practice what they own in speculation; and shall therefore endeavour to convince them that this coertion, which all parties agree to be necessary, is likewise reasonable and safe.

Not at present than to insist on the argument of its *justice*, drawn from its *necessity* alone, we say, say that the final end of every rational creature is happiness: and that the immediate end of such as are destined to two separate states of existence, is the happiness of that state in which they are existing. Otherwise the good of the creature in that station would not have been consulted by its Creator. But as this cannot be said, it follows that whatever opposes the attainment of *that* happiness must be repelled; otherwise the purpose of the Creator would be defeated. If this creature (e. g. man) be not only destined to two different states, but composed of two different natures, one of which is solely adapted to his present station, then the states must not only be separate, but different; and so, consequently, must be the *happiness* attendant upon each. But if the happiness be different, so must the *means* of attaining it. Thus the means of attaining man's happiness *here* is civil society; the means of his happiness *hereafter* is contemplation. If then opinions, the result of contemplation, obstruct the efficacy of civil society, it

follows, that they must be restrained. Accordingly, the ancient masters of wisdom, who, from these considerations, taught, that man was *born* for *action*, not for *contemplation*, universally concurred to establish it as a maxim founded in the nature of things, *that opinions should always give way to civil peace.*

Again, if God destined man to two such states of existence, in each of which the happiness of the existing state was to be his end, it is demonstrable, and almost self-evident, that he, at the same time, so disposed things, that the means of attaining the happiness of one state should not cross or obstruct the means of attaining the happiness of the other. From whence we must conclude, that where the supposed means of each, namely, *opinions* and *civil peace*, do clash, there *one* of them is *not the true means* of happiness. But the means of attaining the happiness peculiar to that state in which the man at present exists, being perfectly and infallibly known to man; and the means of the happiness of his future existence, as far as relates to the discovery of unrevealed truth, but very imperfectly known by him; it necessarily follows, that wherever opinions clash with civil peace, those opinions are no means of future happiness: or, in other words, are either no truths, or truths of no importance.

Thus we have proved, that the magistrate's restraint of those opinions which are mischievous to civil society, is both reasonable and safe. Desiring to be understood, when we speak here of a *rational creature*, to mean the species; and when we speak

of a *civil society*, to mean such as is formed on the principles of public liberty and common rights of subjects. For to unjust and unnatural governments, the most momentous truths will be mischievous and destructive: their end being private, not public utility. It is never then, but where the society stands on legitimate foundations, that its peace is to be preferred to opinions: and there, that preference will be always reasonable and just *.

I shall now shew, that what a *Test-Law* restrains doth directly and necessarily affect the peace of civil society.

Where a determinate principle of some certain sect is particularly opposed to this or that fundamental maxim or usage of society, the malignity is seen, and confessed on all hands. Thus, of those opinions respectively held by the Atheist, the Papist, Anabaptist, and Quaker, mentioned above, there are few who see not their pernicious consequences; or will not own the *restraint* of them to be necessary. But where a religious principle opposes, not one certain maxim or usage, but the general constitution of civil society, the mischief of it is not so easily seen; and if it opposes, not so much the nature of civil society, considered alone, as when in union with the Church, the mischief will be less observed: but and if this be a principle not peculiar to one sect, but common to all, the mischief will be still less understood. This is the case with regard to the pernicious principle

* See this further illustrated above, in the proof of the proposition, *that truth and utility do necessarily coincide.*

thus restrained. It being, as we have observed, that which sets every sect on attempting to establish itself on the ruins of all the rest.

Hence it is that men see the necessity, and seem to applaud the justice of restraint, in the first case; and yet, in the other, cry out against the tyranny of subjecting sects to civil incapacities, which hold no *peculiar opinions* pernicious to the state. But they seem not to apprehend, that the first is not the only legitimate reason which may be urged for the equity of restraint. For where is the difference, with regard to the state, between the principle's being *peculiar* to one sect, or *common* to all; between its injuriously affecting one certain maxim or usage, or the whole frame and composure of a State in union with a Church; if so be the restraint be common to all, as well as the principle? Henceforth then we hope to hear no more of the injustice of civil incapacities on a sect which holds nothing *peculiar*, that can injuriously affect the state.

Having now overturned the two propositions, upon which this famous objection stands, it will give us no further trouble, but leave us at liberty to conclude, *that to abridge a citizen of his civil rights for matters of opinion which affect society, is no violation of justice or natural equity.*

But if still, our adversaries will persist in affirming a *Test* to be contrary to the LAW OF NATURE; one may safely undertake to vindicate it, even on that supposition; as having the universal practice of mankind on our side; who, for the sake of civil society, have ventured, in their municipal laws, to

deviate from the law of nature: and this, with as universal approbation.

But, to avoid obscurity, it will be necessary to say, in what sense the *law* of *nature* is to be understood. For an illiterate tribe of writers have, in this, as in most other matters, done their best to confound all ideas, and remove the marks and boundaries of science: while they make the *law of nature*, as it respects man alone, (for that we have only to do with) "to signify what right reason, "taking in all circumstances, dictates, in every case, "to be done." Thus confounding the *law of nature* with *civil*, and all other laws. And in this sense, our inquiry into the agreement of a TEST with the *law of nature*, after a *Test* hath been proved just and reasonable on the laws of society, would be very impertinent. But, by the LAW OF NATURE, is here meant *that*, which all the best writers on *natural* and *civil laws*, thus define,—*What reason prescribes, under the sole consideration of men's nature, and their mutual relations arising from thence, exclusive of all political or civil combinations.* And in this sense, an inquiry concerning the conformity of a *Test-Law* to the law of nature, may be very proper.

We say then, that it is a practice as approved as it is universal, for states, in compliance to the necessities of society, to form many of their municipal laws in direct opposition to the law of nature. The writings of the civil lawyers are full of these cases. I shall content myself with one or two. The case of that *civil* acquisition called PRESCRIPTION is very

famous. This is, when a man, by enjoying for a certain time, without another's claim or opposition, the other's property, but possessed by him *bona fide*, acquires a full right in it; in such sort, that the true proprietor has no longer any civil action for the recovery of it. Now this most writers agree hath its sole foundation in the *civil law*. The incomparable *Cujacius* says expressly, *that the law of prescription directly contradicts the law of nature and nations, because the true proprietor is dispossessed of his own, without his consent* *. And indeed nothing is more evident. For what I once had, I must ever have a right to; till I resign, transfer, or forfeit it by a voluntary act. What then was it which occasioned this general deviation from the law of nature but the public good? It is of the highest concernment to the state that particulars be secure in their possessions without contest. But there can be no security, if the natural proprietor hath, for all time coming, the liberty to reclaim his right. This would obstruct commerce and discourage intercourse amongst citi-

* Rursus dixerit aliquis, Usucapionem pugnare cum jure gentium, quod ea Dominium invito auferat. Est sane ita: pugnat enim hac in re jus civile cum naturali æquitate, sed tamen hoc fit bono publico. Ait Caius, BONO PUBLICO USUCAPIO INTRODUCTA EST. *Comment. in Pandect. Tit. De Usurpationibus et Usucapionibus.*——*Caius* said this on good authority: for the *laws of the twelve tables* give PRESCRIPTION no force in contests between the subjects of one state and the subjects of another; but leave them to the decision of the *law of nature*. ADVERSUS HOSTEM ÆTERNA AUTHORITAS ESTO, say the *twelve tables*; which Cicero explains, "HOSTIS enim apud Majores nostros is dicebatur qui nunc PEREGRINUM dicimus."

zens. For who would lay out for property, if, for ever after, old claims might be revived? In a word, the LAW OF PRESCRIPTION is so evidently against the *law of nature*, that those who deny this disagreement, are forced to have recourse to that ridiculous signification of the *law of nature* taken notice of above. For they say, *Prescription is not against the law of nature, because this law orders, in every thing what reason says (all circumstances taken in) is fit to be done.* Now which way soever the law of prescription be defended, whether by owning it to be against the law of nature, and justifying the deviation from it, by public utility; or by denying it to be against that law, as here absurdly interpreted; the defence will serve equally for a *Test-Law*, though we should concede to the objection, that it is against the law of nature; which we do not, having largely proved that it is perfectly agreeable to that law in its true and proper signification.

Another instance may be given of this practice in states, *pro bono publico*, which is more easily understood. When man entered into society; and *property*, in consequence thereof, was throughly regulated and established, several things were left out in that general appropriation; and still continued to become, as in the state of nature, the acquisition of the first occupant. Among these were what the lawyers call FERÆ NATURÆ. Yet, for all this, most states have concurred, against the law of nature, to enact GAME LAWS; whereby the right of capture is forbidden to all but those, who, by description, are designed not to be included in the pro-

hibition. And the reason of such laws is evident: It was not at for the *public good* to suffer peasants and mechanics to neglect their occupations, and to run up and down the woods and forests, armed; which in time, through their idle habits, and domestic distresses, draws them on to robbery and brigandage: nor to permit the populace, in towns and cities, to have, and carry *arms* at their pleasure; which would give opportunity and encouragement to sedition and commotions.

In this instance we all confess the justice, and see the reasonableness of impinging on the law of nature. How happens it then, that those who own it here, will not own it in a *Test-Law?* Nothing sure, but this, RELIGION mixes itself in this latter affair; and the jealousies of its encroachment (which preposterously increase as its influence upon us abates) will not give us leave to judge impartially. And the truth is, *parties* must have a watch-word to carry on their business. There was a time, and that not long since past, when the word was, THE DANGER OF THE CHURCH. This served tolerably, while *Religion* was seen to have an influence; but since a general spirit of licence hath *possessed* us, it hath been thought proper to change the cry; and we now hear of nothing but the DANGER OF OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES.

Having now, as is presumed, entirely overturned this bulwark of the cause,

1. By shewing that the rights pretended to are merely imaginary;

2. That if there be any such, it is no violation of the law of nature, to exclude a citizen from them, on account of opinions;
3. That though it be a violation of that law, yet still the exclusion may be well justified on the universal practice of society, arising from necessity.

Having, I say, done this, the remaining objections, which conclude only against the EXPEDIENCY of a Test Law, may be dispatched in much fewer words.

II. The next objection then is, *that a Test-Law is injurious to* TRUE RELIGION, *by encouraging one set of opinions, and discouraging the rest; which is clapping a false bias on the mind, that, in its search after truth, ought to be left entirely free and disengaged.* But it may be made appear, that a *Test* is so far from being injurious to *true Religion*, that it is, in the whole, highly serviceable to it.

Let us 1st then examine how the *discouragement* affects it. Now admitting the *tolerated Religion* to be the *true;* and that several of its members, under the discouragement of a Test-Law, will for the sake of civil advantages leave it, and come over to the *established Religion;* we must yet conclude that, considering the smallness of the discouragement, they who leave it on that account, and knowingly embrace *a false*, must be very profligate and abandoned. Such as must disgrace the true Religion while they continue of it, and otherwise highly prejudice it. Unless it be supposed to be more for the

interests of true Religion to have large crouds though of false and unworthy members, than smaller numbers of sincere professors. It is therefore highly for the interests of true Religion to have such a touchstone, or criterion, as the *Test*, to discriminate its sincere from its corrupt adherents. Which, on this account, can no more be said to be injured by it, than gold is by fire, when, in trying the *ore*, it reduces its bulk, but increases its specifick value. It is evident then, that this objection cannot, with any shew of reason, be made by a member of the *tolerated Religion.*

2. Let us next see how the *encouragement* affects true Religion. Our argument now leads us to suppose the *established* the *true.* On this supposition, is it not for the benefit of mankind in all his interests, that it should be supported by civil power? And can it be supported without a Test? But to wave that consideration, at present; it is owned, that as the use of Religion arises from the real impression it hath upon the mind, the bringing in members, who make only an outward profession, is injurious to Religion. However, none have reason to make this objection, but the established Church. But considering the *smallness* of the *encouragement*, and the probability of the conformity's being on conviction, (for the case supposes the *established* Religion, the *true*) we have no reason think this injury can prove of moment. But be it as it will, is it fit so great a benefit to civil society should be lost on account of a small and partial injury, it may accidentally occasion? It will be time enough to attend to an answer,

when our adversaries bring us an instance of any one signal *benefit* to mankind, in the improvement of civil life, which is not attended with some inconvenience. Till then, we shall, perhaps, think ourselves at liberty to support *this*, though it be not exempt from the common lot to which all human things are subject.

But, 3. Admit some small casual *harm* to be thus derived to Religion; it is not only abundantly compensated by those vast advantages accruing to the State from thence, but likewise infinitely outweighed in the good done to Religion by an *establishment*, on which a *Test* is built, and from which it necessarily flows. We have shewn, and it cannot be too often repeated, that the State entered into alliance with the Church, for the sake of public utility: we have proved, and it cannot be too much inculcated, *that public utility and truth do coincide:* hence it follows, that falsehood, the reverse of truth, must be destructive of public good: and the consequence of this is, that the State must, for the sake of public utility, seek truth, and avoid falshood: at the same time, as she so well knows *what* public utility (which is a sure rule and measure of truth) consists, she will be much better enabled to find out truth than any speculative inquirer, with the boasted aids of philosophy and the schools. From all this it appears, that while a State in union with the Church, hath so great an interest and concern in true Religion, and so great a capacity for discovering what is true; *Religion* is likely to thrive much better than when left to itself: which hath been more fully shewn

in treating of the first motive the State had to seek an alliance with the Church.

If it should be still urged, that though, indeed, true Religion be not injured by a TEST, yet private men are, as having a *false bias*, clapped upon their minds, which draws them, by hopes and fears, from the *true* to *false* Religion: it may be replied, that were the rewards and discouragements of a Test-Law so great as to make those who complied *not* with its threats and invitations uneasy in civil life, and, consequently, those who *did*, to fall through mere human frailty, the objection would be plausible. But when these rewards and discouragements are so small as to tempt only the most profligate and abandoned, little injury is done: for what pretence can such men have of a right to be put under cover for every the slightest temptation?

III. The third objection is, *That a Test-Law may endanger religious liberty. For if, for the good of the State, all, but those of the established Religion, may be kept out of the administration; then for the same good, if reasons of state so require, they may be restrained the exercise of all but the established Religion. And a pretence will not be wanting; for it is certain that diversities of sects oft produce the worst consequences to a state.* To this it may be replied, 1. That though we have reasoned, from the good of society, to prove the necessity of a Test, yet that was not till after we had shewn the justice of it from the clearest principles of the laws of nature and nations. But these laws oppose the taking away religious liberty, that is, freedom to worship

God according to one's own conscience, on any pretence whatsoever. 2. But we say further, that those very principles of the laws of nature and nations, laid down in the first part, to prove the equity of an established Religion and a Test-Law, and on which the whole theory depends, do, in an invincible manner, establish the DIVINE DOCTRINE OF TOLERATION, or the right of worshipping God according to every man's own conscience. So that this *theory* is so far from giving any entrance (as the objection supposes) to the infringement of *religious liberty*, that it lays the foundations of it on the only solid and impregnable grounds. For on these two cardinal principles on which, as on two hinges, the THEORY is raised and turns, namely, *that the State hath only the care of bodies, and the Church only the care of souls;* and *that each society is sovereign, and independent of the other*, is clearly deduced the indefeasible right of religious liberty. 3. But still further. An easy answer may be now given to the old plea of *necessity of conformity, from the danger, to the State, of diversity of Religions*, hinted at in the objection. For the mischief of that *diversity* ariseth solely from the infringement of religious liberty. Do but once grant a toleration, with the establishment of *one*, and an exclusion of all the *rest* from the public administration, and the evil vanishes, and *many* Religions become as harmless as *one*. It being only the tyrannic usurpation of the magistrate, upon the rights of Religion, that made diversity of opinions mischievous and malignant. 4. But lastly, we say, that, even on our adversaries'

supposition, the objection has no force. For had a *Test-Law* been justified, by arguments drawn solely from the good of the State, yet this very principle, if pursued, would be so far from endangering *toleration*, that it would perfectly secure it. For to make Religion serviceable to the State, which is the great end of an *establishment*, it must make a *real* impression on the mind; this is evident from what has been observed in the first book. Now Religion seldom or never makes a real impression on the mind of those who are forced into a Church; all that forcing to outward conformity can do, is to make hypocrites and atheists. Therefore, for the sake of the State, the profession of Religion should be free. Hence may be seen the strange blindness of those politicians, who expect to benefit the State by forcing to outward conformity: which, making men irreligious, destroys the sole means a Church hath of serving the State. But here, by a common fate of politicians, they fell from one blunder to another. For having first, in a tyrannical adherence to their own scheme of policy, or superstitious fondness to their own scheme of worship, infringed upon religious liberty; and then beginning to find, that diversity of sects was hurtful to the State; as it always will be, while the rights of Religion are violated; instead of repairing the mistake, and restoring religious liberty; which would have stifled the pullulating evil in the seed, by affording it no further nourishment; they took the other course, and endeavoured, by a *thorough discipline of conformity*, violently to rend it away; and, with it, they rooted up and destroyed

all that good to society which so naturally springs from Religion, when it has taken a real hold.

IV. The last objection is, *That a Test-Law is the novel invention of a bigotted and barbarous Gothic policy: unknown to the polite and happy ages of* Greece *and* Rome, *when civil and religious liberty flourished beyond compare.* So near as I now am to the conclusion of this discourse, it would stay me too long to detect our adversaries' gross ignorance concerning the condition of religious liberty in the ancient world *: upon which errors the objection is built. It shall suffice, at present, to tell them, they are mistaken in their fact. These happy people had, like us, their ESTABLISHMENTS and TEST-LAWS. Though perhaps it may surprise them, we cannot forbear to tell them, that even *Athens*, their *Athens*, so flourishing and free, had, in its best times, a *Test-Law* to secure the *established Religion.* A Test which was exacted of all their youth. For, *Athens* being a democracy, every citizen had a constant share in the administration. And a Test it was of the strongest kind, even an oath. A copy of which is preserved by *Stobæus* †, who transcribed

* See *the Div. Leg. of Moses*, book II. § 1. 5, and 6.

† Οὐ καλαισχυνῶ ὅπλα τὰ ἱερὰ, ὐδ' ἐγκαλαλείψω τὸν παρασάτην, ὅτῳ ἂν στοιχήσω. ΑΜΥΝΩ ΔΕ ΥΠΕΡ ΙΕΡΩΝ, καὶ ὑπὲρ ὁσίων, καὶ μόνος, καὶ μέλλων πολλῶν. τὴν παλρίδα δὲ ὐκ ἐλάσσω παραδώσω, πλείω δὲ καὶ ἀρείω, ὅσην ἂν παραδέξομαι. καὶ εὐηκοήσω τῶν ἀεὶ κρινόντων ἐμφρόνως, καὶ τοῖς θεσμοῖς τοῖς ἐδρυμένοις πείσομαι, καὶ ὅς τινας ἂν ἄλλως τὸ πλῆθος ἐδρύσηται ἐμφρόνως, καὶ ἄν τις ἀναιρῇ τὲς θεσμὲς ἢ μὴ πείθηται, ὐκ ἐπιβρέψω, ἀμυνῶ δὲ καὶ μόνος, καὶ μέλλων πολλῶν. καὶ ΙΕΡΑ ΤΑ ΠΑΤΡΙΑ ΤΙΜΗΣΩ· ἴστορες θεοὶ τύτων. Joan. Stobæi de Repub. Serm. xli. p. 243. Edit. Lugdun. 1608.

this curious fragment from the writings of the *Pythagoreans*, the great school of ancient politics *. It is conceived in these words: "I will not dishonour "the sacred arms, nor desert my comrade in battle: "I will DEFEND AND PROTECT MY COUNTRY AND "MY RELIGION, whether alone, or in conjunction "with others: I will not leave the public in a worse "condition than I found it, but in a better: I will "be always ready to obey the supreme magistrate, "with prudence, and to submit to the established "laws, and to all such as shall be hereafter estab-"lished by full consent of the people: and I will "never connive at any other who shall presume to "despise or disobey them; but will avenge all such "attempts on the sanctity of the republic, either "alone, or in conjunction with the people: and "lastly, I WILL CONFORM TO THE NATIONAL RE-"LIGION. So help me those Gods who are the "avengers of perjury."

Here we see, that after every man had sworn, *I will defend and protect the Religion of my country,* in consequence of the obligation the State lies under to protect the *established worship,* he concludes, *I will conform to it:* the directest and strongest of all *Tests.* But a Test of conformity to the established worship was not only required of those who bore a share in the civil administration, but of those too who were chosen to preside in their religious rites.

* See *The Div. Leg.* p. 362, to 381. 3d. Edit.

Demosthenes has recorded the oath which the priestesses of *Bacchus*, called Γεραιραὶ, took on entering into their office. "I observe a religious "chastity, and am clean and pure from all other "defilements, and from conversation with man: "AND I CELEBRATE THE THEOINIA AND IOBAC-"CHIA TO BACCHUS ACCORDING TO THE ESTAB-"LISHED RITES, AND AT THE PROPER TIMES*.

So that those, with whom the authority of the WISE ANCIENTS have so much weight, will, we hope, from this example in the wisest of them, begin to entertain a better opinion of a *Test-Law*, and of a Religion so *established*.

But a stronger evidence of the indispensable necessity of these things, for the support and security of government, can hardly be given, than in the example of the famous *William Penn*, one, who by his principles was most averse to it, who strove most to avoid it, and yet is forced to have recourse to it. We have seen before, how the same man, as *head of a sect*, had, by a side-wind, introduced SOCIETY into Religion. We shall now see that, when become a *law-giver*, he found an equal necessity of having that society ESTABLISHED, and securing his establishment by a *Test-Law*. In his *Frame of Government for the Province of Pensylvania in America*, we have amongst his *fundamental consti-*

* Ἁγιεύω, καὶ εἰμὶ καθαρὰ, καὶ ἁγνὴ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ὧν καθαρεύουσιν, καὶ ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς ζυνουσίας, καὶ τὰ Θεοίνια, καὶ Ἰοβακχεῖα γεραίρω τῷ Διονύσῳ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΑ ΠΑΤΡΙΑ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς καθήκουσι χρόνοις. *Orat. Cont. Neæram.*

tions these following: "That all persons living in 'this province, who confess and acknowledge the 'one almighty and eternal God to be the Creator, 'Upholder, and Ruler of the world, shall in no wise 'be molested or prejudiced for their religious per-'suasion or practice in matters of faith and wor-'ship." And, "That all treasurers, judges, masters 'of the rolls, sheriffs, justices of the peace, and 'other officers and persons whatsoever relating to 'courts or trials of causes, or any other service in 'the government; and all members elected to serve 'in provincial council, and general assembly, and all 'that have right to elect such members, shall be 'such as profess faith in Jesus Christ."

By these laws an *established Religion* is first of all constituted, which is the Christian: and, secondly, a *Test*, which excludes all, but such, from a share in the administration, even the remotest share, as electing representatives to serve in provincial council and general assembly. And all this, in as good legal form as the PRIEST himself could wish: only (as arising from a necessity not to be gloried in) a little disguised in the expression, by the use of *affirmative* rather than *negative* terms. As to the large and extensive conditions of this *establishment* and *Test*, that is another question. What these CONSTITUTIONS are here cited for is to shew the necessity of the things themselves.

I have but one further observation to make, before I end this chapter: it is, that the grand and pal sumary argument against a *Test* concludes, with equal

strength, against an *establishment:* unless, perhaps, our adversaries have discovered, that the clergy are to have no share with the laity, in the *common rights of subjects.* For it hath been shewn above, that one of the essential privileges of an *established* Church is a public maintenance for its clergy, given by the State, in reward for their services in teaching the people virtue and obedience. Now as the ministers of all the tolerated Churches do, or profess to do, the same; they seem to have something a better pretence to a share in these places of profit, possessed by the endowed clergy, than their lay-brethren have to what the laity of the established Church hold from them. At least it must be said, that the *injustice* of debarring either, for matters of opinion, is equal. I make no question but those, with whom we have to do, like their *principle* the better for this generous and impartial consequence. But it is not their approbation I am so much concerned to procure. I now address myself to the lovers of their country under the present constitution of Church and State. I would shew them, in what our adversaries' principles necessarily terminate; *a total subversion of all established Religion.* For this last claim puts an end to it at once. And shall we believe it will not be made whenever the other is obtained? Are not the ministers of the tolerated sects amongst the first, to push on this demand of the *common rights of subjects?* Have they less regard to their own advantage than to that of their flock? Or are they, good men, persuaded, that these *common rights* extend not to churchmen?

However, the State, we may be sure, will be npartial in its justice. So that when once we see ectaries of all kinds supply the civil administra-ion; the next place to look for them is in the pulpit nd the stall.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE MISTAKEN PRINCIPLES ON WHICH WRITERS ON THIS SUBJECT HAVE HITHERTO PROCEEDED; THE MISCHIEFS AND ABSURDITIES THAT FOLLOWED THEM; AND THE REMEDIES WHICH THE PRINCIPLES HERE LAID DOWN ARE ABLE TO SUPPLY.

I HAVE now, at length, and I hope to the reader's satisfaction, performed what I undertook; which was, *to demonstrate the equity and necessity of an established religion and a test-law on the principles of the law of nature and nations.* It only remains to shew, (as I promised in the beginning of this discourse) what FALSE PRINCIPLE it was which, embraced in common, hath misled both parties: And brought one to conclude that an *Established Religion* was of divine right; and the other, that a *Test-law* was a violation of all human ones. For, as the excellent *Hooker* says, " a common received error is " never utterly overthrowne, till such time as we go " from signes to causes, and shew some manifest " root or fountaine thereof common unto all, where- " by it may clearely appeare how it hath come to " passe that so many have beene overseene." By this, likewise, we shall add new strength to our conclusions, (as it will afford us a view of the defects in

the other scheme of defence) and remove any remaining doubts that may have arisen from the authority of great names against us.

When a love for truth, my sole motive to this inquiry, had engaged me in an examination of the nature and end of *an established religion and a Test-law;* and that I had laid down unquestioned principles, and drawn conclusions from them, as I thought, demonstrative; I was yet not a little staggered to find that some great names, (to whom, as writers, we owe the highest regard) had, from the very same principles, deduced the very contrary conclusions. This then was to be accounted for, if I expected my argument should have a fair hearing. And, on reflection, I supposed that the error, which seduced them, might be this; the defenders of an *established religion* have all along gone on to support it on the motives of TRUTH, and not of UTILITY. That is, that religion was to be *established* and protected AS IT WAS THE TRUE RELIGION: not for the sake of its CIVIL UTILITY; which is the great PRINCIPLE OF THIS THEORY. For that notion which, *Grotius* tells us, some Churches on the Continent had of civil society, seems to have been entertained by the defenders of *our* establishment.—"Alii diversas [religiones] "minus tolerant; quippe non in hoc *tantum* ordi-"natas a Deo civitates ac magistratus dictantes, ut a "*corporibus et possessionibus* injuriæ abessent, *sed* "*ut, quo more ipse jussisset, eo in commune colere-*"*tur;* cujus officii negligentes multos pœnam *dli-*"*orum impietati* debitam in se accersisse."

Now, unluckily for truth, the best writers on the

other side took this mistaken principle for granted; imagining there could be no other possible cause assigned for *established* religion: And, at the same time, finding *this* full, both of absurdity and mischief, too hastily concluded an *established religion* secured by a *Test-law* to be a violation of the rights of nature and nations.

But let us take a short view of the absurdities and mischiefs that arise from the hypothesis which builds an established religion and a Test-law on a principle of *religious truth*, and not of *civil utility*.

If religion is to be established and protected by a Test-law, only because it is the *true religion*, then opinions are encouraged as opinions; that is, as *truths*, not as *utilities*; and discouraged as opinions; that is, as *errors*, not as *mischiefs*. See then what follows, both with regard to an *establishment* and a *Test*.

I. An *establishment* is unjust, 1. Because the civil magistrate as such hath no right to determine, which is the true religion; this power not being given him, (as we have shewn) on man's entering into society. Nor could it be given him; because one man cannot impower another to determine for him in matters of religion. Therefore he not being judge, and there being no other to be found with authority to arbitrate between him and the several schemes of religion, he hath no right to establish his own. Again, it is *unjust*, because, were the magistrate a competent judge of what was *true religion*, he would have yet no right to regard its followers, or discourage its opposers; because, as hath been shewn,

matters of opinion belong not to his jurisdiction. He being, as St. *Peter* * tells us, "sent by God for "the *punishment* of EVIL DOERS, and for the *praise* "of them that DO WELL." 2. An *establishment* is absurd: It being impossible that the end of it should be attained. This end is the protection and support of *true religion.* But the civil magistrate, who is to establish it, assuming to himself the sole authority of judging which is so, must necessarily conclude in favour of his own; so that the *established religion,* all the world over, will be the magistrate's: that is, for one place where the *true* religion is established, the *false* will be established in a thousand. And whether this be for the interest of *true religion,* let the maintainers of this hypothesis consider. I will only observe, that, as the civil magistrate had neither by nature, nor by the law of God, this jurisdiction; so it is impossible he should have it; because the very exercise of it would destroy the end for which it is supposed to be given.

II. I might shew, in the next place, that this hypothesis takes away all the *reason* on which the mutual grants and privileges of Church and State, consequent on an alliance, are founded: which must all, therefore, cease: such, for instance, as *the clergy's right to a public maintenance:* which, now, being for the support of opinions, would be contrary to the fundamental laws of society, by making men contribute to the maintenance of opinions which they reject and think false. And so of the rest. But why do

* 1 Ep. ii. 14.

we talk of mutual grants and privileges, or stated conditions of alliance, when,

III. This scheme of an establishment, not making the alliance between Church and State, on a free convention; but appointing the State a kind of executor of the Church's decrees, the *alliance* can have no stated laws or conditions of union: on the contrary, the privileges of each society must be perpetually fluctuating and various; having no other grounds than the unsettled notions men chance to embrace concerning the extent of that support and protection which the State is obliged to bestow; and notions directed by no rule will never be adapted to the public good. Thus all fixed and precise ideas of an *establishment* being confounded, ill-designing men have a handle to make it what they please. Which, in fact, we find they have done, to the infinite damage of society, in most places, where this notion of its original hath prevailed. So that, instead of this peaceable union so beneficent to civil society, (the fruits of a *free convention*, under the stated and well known conditions, mutually given and received) we see nothing but violent and continued struggles between the TWO SOCIETIES, for power and independency.

IV. A *Test-law*, on this scheme, will be absolutely UNJUST. For now opinions being restrained as *errors*, not as *mischiefs*—*restraint* converts into *punishment*. For the design of a Test is now, not to keep men of other religions out of the *civil administration*, but to bring them in to the *established Church*. And its discouragements are those WHOLE-

SOME SEVERITIES so warmly recommended, to reduce men from the *false* to the *true* religion. Where if the first dost do not succeed, it must be repeated and enlarged till it does. This is *punishment*, properly so called; and punishment, for what is no act of the will, we have shewn to be unjust. But were opinions, as such, liable to punishment, the civil magistrate could not inflict it; because his jurisdiction extends only to the care of bodies. Further, this is depriving men of their civil rights for matters of opinion, as such; but this, we have shewn to be against the law of nature. On all these accounts, a Test-law would be unjust.

V. Again, a *Test-law* on this scheme would be most *mischievous*, as directly tending to the destruction of religious liberty. For the end being to reduce men from the false, to the true religion, the severities, as we say, must be increased till they have strength to operate effectually. And there is no stopping short, without exposing the scheme to the greatest absurdities. Therefore, the more ingenuous defenders of a *Test*, on this scheme, are those who regard a toleration, not as a right of nature due to mankind, but as a concession which the necessities of the times extorted. For it is certain that *toleration* and *such a Test* can no more stand together on common principles, than liberty and persecution.

This is but a very short hint of the sad consequences which attend an established religion and a Test-law on the common hypothesis; but enough to evince the following conclusions:

I. First, that those great defenders of *civil* and

religious liberties whose projects are here opposed, must needs think hardly of an established religion raised on that hypothesis; which so directly tends to the destruction of both.

II. Secondly, that the arguments employed in their various writings, against such establishments, do not at all effect or reach an established religion and a Test-law founded on this theory. For that,

III. Thirdly, on comparison, it appears, that *this* removes and keeps clear of all those monstrous mischiefs and absurdities with which the other scheme abounds: as shewing the magistrate's act in the *alliance* to be reasonable, just, and necessary: as stating and fixing the mutual *conditions* of the alliance with the utmost precision and exactness: as proving the equity and necessity of a *Test-law;* and securing religious liberty by a free *toleration.* And, to shew that nothing of advantage is wanting to make this scheme preferred to the common one, it may be observed, in the last place, that an establishment, made only on the motives of CIVIL UTILITY, secures that very end, which the other pretends solely to aim at in establishing a Church; and which yet, by pursuing in a visionary manner, it never attains: I mean, *the advancement of truth.* For if public utility and truth do coincide, then to provide for that utility, is, at the same time, providing for truth, its inseparable associate. On the whole then we see that, in this case, to aim at *truth* is losing as well *that,* as utility; but to aim at *utility* is gaining both together.

I will conclude, in requesting my reader to have this always in mind, THAT THE TRUE END FOR

WHICH RELIGION IS ESTABLISHED IS, NOT TO PROVIDE FOR THE TRUE FAITH, BUT FOR CIVIL UTILITY, as the key to open to him the whole mystery of this controversy; and the clew to lead him safe through all the intricacies, and perplexities, in which it has been involved.

The settling this matter on true foundations seems to be the only thing wanting to perfect the felicity of the *British* constitution. For where *literary*, *civil* and *religious* liberty, by occasionally undergoing a free scrutiny, have at length become generally understood; *this last remaining question*, of so much importance, concerning an *established religion*, hath been so little examined to the bottom, or the true principles of it searched into, that the one party defended it on *such* as directly tend to overthrow every thing already settled in favour of religious, and even civil and literary liberty: and the *other* opposed it on *such* as must make all that liberty, they themselves had been long contending for, and had at length obtained, degenerate into the worst licentiousness. Now whether we have contributed any thing to facilitate the removal of this last obstruction to a state of sober and perfect liberty, is submitted to the judgment of the public.

CHAP. V.

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH THE REMAINING OBJECTIONS OF BOTH PARTIES ARE CONSIDERED.

THE wild *Indians*, amidst their uncultivated wastes, see the beauty and use of every thing around them; and are not such fools as to complain for want of better accommodations than what they find provided to their hands. Yet, as important as this truth is to them, they are little solicitous to enquire from whence all this order and harmony arises: they have received it from their ancestors, that the earth was supported on the back of a huge tortoise; and they do not take it well to have their tortoise disturbed or laughed at. The friends of our happy establishment have, many of them, a little of this Indian taste.—In their fear of *shaking foundations* they are unwilling that the weight of the constitution should be removed from the tortoise of old opinion, to rest upon a *theory which* they think *does not exactly tally with fact, as few theories do.*

This may be thought a notable objection. But on what mistaken principle it stands, I shall now endeavour to shew. The word THEORY has been appropriated (as it were) to the explanation of a *natural system.* Now as such theories are good only in pro-

portion to their agreement with *fact*; and as nature so much withdraws herself from our inquiry; it is no wonder that it should have grown into an observation, *that few theories agree with fact*; and that this should be esteemed, what it really is, an objection to theories of this kind.

But our theory is an explanation of an *artificial*, not a *natural* system: in which measures very different from the latter are to be followed. For truth being the end of all kinds of theories, a right theory of *nature* is to be obtained only by pursuing fact; for God is the author of that system: but in a theory of *politics*, which is an *artificial* system, to follow fact is no certain way to truth, because man is the author of that system. Abstract ideas, and their general relations, are the guides to lead us into truth; and *fact* hath, with good reason, but a subsidiary use. As therefore the method to be pursued is different, so should the judgment be, which is passed upon it: the goodness of this theory being estimated, not according to its agreement with *fact*, but *right reason*. In the former case, the theory should be regulated by the fact: in the latter, the fact by the theory.

But still, *fact*, as we say, hath even here its subsidiary use. For as this theory must be founded on the principles of *right reason* to render it *just*; so, to satisfy us that it is *real*, that it is *practicable*, and no fanciful utopia, it must be supported by *fact*: that is, it must be shewn that the policy, explained and justified in the theory, hath been practised to the common benefit of all. This is the use, and the only use, of consulting fact in these kinds of theories. And this,

I presume, will be enough to recommend the theory of this ALLIANCE: which was written with no other view, than to furnish every lover of his country with reasonable principles, to oppose to the destructive fancies of the enemies of our happy establishment. Not to reform the fundamental constitutions of the State; but to shew they needed no reforming: an attempt, I should think, neither irrational, nor unseasonable.

An example, used before, will illustrate what we have been now saying. The *theory* of civil society, founded on the *original compact*, when it was first urged against the advocates for arbitrary government, had the fortune to fall into ill hands, the enemies of their country; who inforced it, not to defend the liberties we enjoyed, but to alter the nature of the constitution: the consequence was, that the authors being justly obnoxious, the principles were suspected, and then rejected. Afterwards they fell into more temperate hands; and being then employed to justify the subjects' rights under our limited monarchy, they were in a little time generally received; and men were brought to found their liberties on those principles; which liberties, 'till then, they chose to claim on the precarious grants of ancient monarchs, or the illiberal tenure of more ancient custom.

As to our adversaries, if they thought that the few cant terms of *natural rights, civil liberty, priestcraft*, and *persecution*, curiously varied by a jargon of sophistical logic, would be sufficient to undo what the wisdom of all ages and people has concurred to

establish, many of them have lived to see themselves mistaken.

But if REASON be what they require: and that they think they have a right to expect a reason for every thing, we have here endeavoured to satisfy them. If they like, as it is probable they will, their own reasons better, it will then come to be a dispute about taste. I have given them corn. They chuse to stick by their acorn-husks. Much good may do them.

Nothing remains but to remove an argument *ad invidiam*, the only logic hitherto employed against this *theory*, and which would persuade the reader that it MAKES RELIGION A TOOL OF POLITICS. If by this they mean, that I believe there is a *political use of religion*, whereby it may be made to advance the good of civil society; and that therefore I have endeavoured to make this use of it, they do me no injustice. I not only believe so, but I have shewn* that we have not a more illustrious instance of the wisdom and goodness of God, than in his thus closely uniting our present and our future happiness. I believe what the BEST GOOD MAN of our order was not ashamed to own before me. "A politique use of "religion (says he†) there is. Men fearing God, "are thereby a great deal more effectually than by "positive laws restrayned from doing evil, inasmuch "as those laws have no further power than over our "outward actions only, whereas unto mens inward

* See *The Divine Legation of Moses.* V. 1.

† *Eccl. Pol.* B. V. Sect. 2.

" cogitations, unto the privie intents and motions of " their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle. What " more savage, wilde, and cruell, then man, if he see " himselfe able, either by fraude to over-reach, or " by power to overbeare, the laws whereunto he " should be subject? Wherefore in so great bold- " ness to offend, it behoveth that the world should " be held in awe, not by a vaine surmise, but a true " apprehension of somewhat, which no man may " thinke himselfe able to withstand. THIS IS THE " POLITIQUE USE OF RELIGION." Thus the admirable *Hooker*, where he takes notice how certain atheists of his time, by observing this use of religion, were fortified in their folly, in thinking it was invented by statesmen to keep men in awe. An idle vision, which I have so thoroughly confuted in another place *, that, I persuade myself, it shall, for the future, be only thought fit to go in rank with the tales of nurses, and the dreams of free-thinkers.

But if they mean, that I have endeavoured *to make religion a convenient engine to ambitious and intriguing politicians to work the clergy, as the tools of power, in a separate interest from the community*, this is a very gross calumny. I have expressly declared, that where I speak of religion's serving the State, I always mean, by the State, a *legitimate* government, or civil policy founded on the natural rights and liberties of mankind. And, so far is this plan of *alliance* from contributing to those mischiefs,

* *Divine Leg. of Moses*, B. III. Sect. 6.

that it effectually prevents them: and, what is more, is the only scheme of an ESTABLISHMENT which can prevent them.

To conclude all, we live in an age when the principles of public liberty are well understood: and, as corrupt as the age is, we must needs imagine, there are many real lovers of their country. But then a certain licentiousness (which is the spirit of the times) is as fatally apt to delude honest men in their ideas of public good, as to infect corrupt men in their pursuit of private satisfactions. Now, as such are always apt to embrace with warmth any project which hath the face of advancing public interests, I do not wonder they should be drawn in, to think favourably of an attempt which professes only to vindicate the COMMON RIGHTS OF SUBJECTS; or that they should be inclined to judge hardly of a writer, who frankly opposes those pretentions. "Be- "cause (to use the words of the great author last quoted *) "such as openly reproved supposed dis- "orders of State, are taken for principal friends to "the common benefite of all; and for men that "carry singular freedome of mind. Under this fair "and plausible colour, whatsoever they utter passeth "for good and currant. That which wanteth in the "waight of their speech, is supplied by the apt- "ness of mens minds to accept and believe it. "Whereas on the other side, if we maintaine things "that are established, we have to strive with a

* *Hooker's Eccl. Pol.* Lib. 1. Sect. 1.

" number of heavy prejudices, deeply rooted in the " hearts of men, who think that herein we serve " the time, and speak in favour of the present state, " because thereby WE EITHER HOLD OR SEEK PRE- " FERMENT."

THE PRESENT DELUSION OF MANY PROTESTANTS, CONSIDERED:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. PETER'S POOR, NOVEMBER 5, 1715.

BY BENJAMIN HOADLY, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

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1 THESS. II. 11.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.

THIS day hath so just a title to every sentiment, and every signification, of joy and gratitude, we can possibly entertain or express, as we are *Christians*, as we are Protestants, and as we are men; that I could heartily wish that every thought and every token of uneasiness, might be banished far from it. But since it is so, that it bears upon it, not only the signatures of God's repeated mercy to this nation; but the marks of an ingratitude and stupidity, perhaps not to be equalled in all history: since it doth not more effectually call to our mind that great won-

der of Providence, to which it gave a beginning within our own memory, and which our own eyes have seen completed; than it points out to us that scene of iniquity and rebellion, which is now opened, in order to perplex and unravel that lovely frame of things, which heaven itself hath wrought for us: the commemoration of the blessings of this day, cannot but lead our thoughts, at present, to the attempts of those, who would rob us, and all our posterity, of them; and must create in us an astonishment, mixed with pity and indignation, at the conduct of many amongst us, from whom the ties of religion, the solemnity of oaths, the security of all that is valuable in this world, the interest of their native country, and all the obligations of honour, and conscience, required and demanded another manner of behaviour.

It is a conduct, indeed, which can hardly be resolved into any thing, but a *fatal delusion*, sent down upon them, as a just punishment of their ingratitude for the greatest public happiness that ever any nation enjoyed; and will at least give us a sensible demonstration, that, as in religion, according to the *Apostle*, a perverse and wilful opposition to *truth*, naturally, as well as by the justice of God, leads, in the end, to a belief, and confidence, in every thing absurd, and unreasonable: so, in worldly matters, ingratitude, and insensibility, under the public blessings of Providence, lead men, step by step, to mistake evil for good; to court misery for happiness; and to pursue their own ruin, under the notion of something desirable: and that, in both cases, it is

but just in Almighty God, to punish men for their wilful baseness of spirit, by leaving them entirely to the conduct of it; and, in the *scripture phrase, to send them,* who will not know the value of truth or happiness, freely offered to them, *a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;* and be led blindfold, by the greatest absurdities, against all the evidences of reason, and experience, into the paths of ruin and destruction. Nor were there ever indeed more surprising instances of this, than what our own eyes may, at this time, behold in this kingdom.

The wonder is not, that the professed members of the *Church* of *Rome,* unite their hearts and hands; and leave no methods, whether of deceit or violence, unattempted, for the service of that cause, which, in all their lowest fortunes, they never suffer to be removed out of their sight; that *they* put on all the forms of complaisance, and dissimulation; of civility and good humour, even to hereticks themselves, to inveigle them into their own ruin; that they flatter, and promise, and swear, every thing that is good and kind, to their fellow-labourers; and, at the same time, enter into all the resolutions of destruction, and desolation, whenever the opportunity of power shall come. This is nothing, but what is worthy of themselves, and of that *Church,* to the slavery of which they have devoted themselves. It is no more, than what they fairly, and publickly, profess; if *Protestants* will but open their eyes, and see it. It is their religion, and their conscience: it is inculcated upon them, as the great condition of their acceptance with God, that no good-nature of their own; no obliga-

tions from others; no ties of oaths, and solemn assurances; no regards to truth, justice, or honour; are to restrain them from any thing, let it be of what sort soever, that is for the security, or temporal advancement, of their Church.

The case with *them* is not, as it is with *Protestants*, who, to their shame, have indeed been unmerciful to one another, on all sides: but then, their mutual violences have been rather the sudden effects of passion and revenge; and still there hath been a principle left, by which, in the time of calm and cool reflection, there may be hope of curing so great an evil. And every sort of them, when they are undermost, disown, and disclaim, the lawfulness of all such proceedings.

But in the *Romish Church*, it is firmly settled, upon never-altered principles; it is an established *article* of religion; equally believed, and owned, and inculcated, in their adversity, and low estate, as in the heighth of their power. It stands unrepealed, upon record; and it is confirmed by experience, that *they* are most likely not to fail of the honours of saintship, and the applauses of that *Church*, who act the most uniformly, and the most steadily, upon that foundation. Every weapon they use, is sanctified; every instance of fraud and perfidiousness; every degree of violence, and fury; is consecrated. It is not only allowed; but first recommended, and afterwards rewarded.

This, therefore, is not the wonder, that men devoted to such a *Church*, keep up to their antient character, and profession; that they don't deflect a step

from the glories of their *illustrious ancestors*; that they are not at all moved by the peace and interest of their country; nor by that security and quiet, which even themselves might enjoy, by the indulgence of a government they will not support; that *they* are still the same implacable adversaries; and still set on fire, by the principles, and the zeal, of their religion, to scatter ruin and destruction, round about them; and to deprive their neighbours of every thing that is good and valuable.

But the wonder is, that so many of those, who call themselves Protestants; and of those, who have violently wrested the name of *Churchmen* out of the hands of their brethren, and appropriated it to themselves, as its only advocates and patriots; of those, whose cares for its interest, and fears for its safety, have been swelled and magnified, above those of all around them, to a degree almost romantic; and even of some, amongst them, who have solemnly given their faith to the *present establishment*, and not only sworn themselves to *that*, but abjured all contrary pretensions: that so many, I say, who will take it amiss not to be called *Protestants*, and much more amiss, not to be called *Churchmen*, have shewn too great a readiness to join, some, their hands, some their hearts, and some, their indifference, with the worst of enemies, in the worst of causes; and to be deluded themselves, as well as help to delude others, into utter destruction, by the weakest, and most groundless insinuations, and all the most absurd methods, that ever any cause was supported, and propagated by. It cannot, therefore, but be

of use, at this time, to consider more particularly,

I. The *cause*, now openly avowed by our enemies.

II. The *marks* of a *strong delusion*, in the *behaviour* of *those*, whom I have just now mentioned, with relation to it.

I. The *cause* is now openly avowed. It is no longer either denied, or dissembled. It is, to set upon the throne of these kingdoms, a *pretender*, at whose first appearance in the world, the whole nation of *Protestants*, of all parties, and all orders, and all degrees, was filled with universal dissatisfaction, and uneasiness, by the concurrence of all the suspicious circumstances that could well be united in one matter of fact; and whose *imaginary title* our laws abhor, as absolutely inconsistent with themselves, and ruinous to our whole constitution: and not only this, but a *pretender*, who, to make him the fitter to govern this *Protestant* nation, and to be the patron of this *Protestant* Church, hath received all his first, and deepest impressions, from *that* of *Rome*, to which he hath devoted himself with an uncommon bigotry.

And this *Church*, from which alone he hath learned all his obligations, and every thing that he accounts *religion*, is the same, which keeps up an eternal claim to the *riches*, as well as the *obedience*, of this nation: the same, which hath assured him, with the assumed authority of God himself, that he not only *may*, but *must*; that it is not only *lawful*, but his *duty*, by all the methods of dissimulation and

force, to extirpate *heresy* out of our religion, or ourselves out of the world: the same, which hath taught him, that promises, and professions, made to *hereticks*, in order to the obtaining his end, are good, and laudable; but, after *that* is obtained, become *sin*, *by being observed:* the same, in one word, which knows no virtue, but, that which is the meanest vice and disgrace of human nature, a blind submission of the conscience to man's authority, where man can have no authority; and which knows no vice, but, that which is the supreme virtue and glory of an understanding being, the *standing fast in that religious liberty*, with which Almighty God, both by the law of nature, and the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, *hath made us free;* that *freedom of choice*, and honest use of our reason, (the neglected gift of God,) which alone can render the religion of a man, acceptable in his eyes.

If the impressions of this, are so much decayed with any amongst us, that they ask, *where*, or *when*, that Church hath taught him all this: let any of its advocates answer, and tell us, *where*, or *when*, that *Church* ever taught the contrary: let them name any one instance, in which the public authority, or the most celebrated writers, of that *Church*, ever disapproved or condemned; or ever did not encourage, and applaud, any sort of wickedness for their own temporal interest: let them shew us, where their leaders inculcate it, as an indispensable duty, that *oaths* taken, and *promises* solemnly made, to such as they please to account *hereticks*, are to be religiously observed: let them produce their authentic condem-

nations, and anathematizations, of those of their own *Church*, who have dealt in all the arts of *perfidiousness* and *cruelty*, to enlarge, or recover, dominion, and riches. This might justly be expected; if it were just to expect what is impossible.

They themselves know that this is no imaginary *satire*, merely to embellish a discourse; or to raise the passions of men: but that it is too plain to all, who will open their eyes, and see. It is writ too deep in characters of blood, and ruin, to be so much as denied even by themselves, that the methods, of *dissimulation*, to inveigle unhappy men into a trust and confidence; of *perfidiousness*, to cut in sunder the ties of all security; of *barbarities*, and *inhumanities*, in cold blood, and upon mature deliberation, have been all consecrated to glory; blessed, applauded, and rewarded, by the public voice of that Church: whose true, and legitimate son, we acknowledge *him* to be, who now claims our destruction, as his right; and comes forth to assert it, sanctified by the benedictions, and prepared by the lessons, of so holy a mother; and fired with the madness of revenge, made ten times hotter by the fury of such a religion. This is a short view of that *scene* of things, which not only *may*, but *must come*, if the *cause* now avowed by our enemies should be crowned with power and opportunity.

One would think, indeed, if either the sense of feeling, or of gratitude, were not wholly dead amongst us, it might be enough to alarm the coldest breast to think only upon what the same *cause* professeth, and attempts, to remove from us. To deprive us of

a KING, who is possessed of all the royal and humane virtues, that any nation could wish to see united in a governor; and possessed of them, in so great a degree, that were his *people* but as willing to be made happy, as *he* is, to make them so, nothing upon earth could equal the blessings of his reign; of a KING, who hath given the world, the sensible and certain demonstration of experience, that no heighth of power can corrupt the equity of his nature, or disorder the temper of his soul: to deprive us of such a KING; and with him, of a PRINCE, whose noble passion for the true interest of this nation, makes his name dear to every true *Briton*, and every true *Protestant:* of a PRINCESS, whose private virtues give light, and pleasure to all around her; and whose greatness of soul taught her long ago, to disdain the allurements of *Popery*, though clothed in all this world's majesty and glory: and of a *numerous race*, to be formed for the support of our religion, and liberties, by these examples: such a *scene* of *good*, in possession, as few nations upon earth have ever experienced! And such a view of *good* to come, as calls the *blessings* of *future* times into *our own;* and adds to the happiness of the present generation, a *taste* of the happiness of their posterity! And, what is this, in other words, but to deprive us of every present good, and every future hope, of *Protestants*, *Britons*, and *men?*

If we sum it up, therefore, and shew it in one view; the *cause* now entered into, by our enemies, is, to remove from us, a KING whose *right* is the very essence, band, and fundamental law, of *society;* and

whose inclination, nature, and religion, all conspire to make him the father of his people, delighting in their happiness, as in his own: and to place in his stead, a *pretender*, whose imaginary *title* is founded upon the very supposition of our *ruin;* and who, if he were possessed of all the good qualities with which his best friends could wish, at this time, to paint him out, yet is himself possessed by such a *religion*, as must destroy them all; such a *religion*, as teacheth him not to expect either favour from those who profess it here, or mercy from God hereafter, unless he makes the destruction, both of our *Church* and *State*, the great business of his life, whenever he hath power in his hands: nay, assures him of the wrath both of God and man, should he be so *wicked*, as ever to think of observing those *protestations*, or keeping those *promises*, which are only allowed to delude unwary men into their own ruin. This is the aspect which it hath upon ourselves, at present.

And then, for the future, it is not only to remove from us, those *royal pledges* of good to come, which our eyes now behold; but it is to banish far out of our sight, the most distant prospect of any Protestant royal family, for ever; and to place over us, a long chain of popish successors, never to be dissolved, or interrupted; in which the latter branches may be sure to complete any part of our ruin, in which the former may have failed. So that it is, in deed, and in truth, to rob us, and our latest posterity, of every thing we can value, in this world; and, at the same time, of all thought of ever enjoying it again:

and it is, to bring upon us, and upon all after us, every evil that human nature ought most to fear, without so much as the faint glimmering of any *hope* of future redress.

This is the *cause* now set on foot by our enemies. And, I am very sure, not aggravated beyond truth; because it is a *cause*, too bad to be capable of aggravation. No colours can make it more black, than it is in itself. No words can represent it worse, than it represents itself now to the world, supported by the zeal of *Popery:* whose only strength lies in the one comprehensive principle, of holy perfidiousness, and iniquity; which tears every good principle up by the roots, and sanctifies and strengthens every bad one. I might have placed before your eyes, a scene of those evils, which the constant experience of this nation itself, as well as of all around us, assures us, have always accompanied it. But I chose rather to show it in another light; that such as are deluded with the smooth words, and fair promises, of its advocates, may be convinced, from those obligations of religion, and conscience, which it layeth upon its disciples, that it not only always was, in fact, so fatal, wherever it hath prevailed; but *never can be otherwise.* And yet, even with respect to this *cause;* the worst, in all its circumstances, that any nation under heaven can be witness to; how astonishing is the conduct of many, who call themselves *Protestants*, and perhaps think themselves so? Let us now, therefore, consider,

II. The marks of a *strong delusion*, in the behaviour of those, who join either their *hands*, or their

hearts, or their *indifference*, to carry on the work of our worst enemies; whilst they expect to be thought *Protestants*, and *Churchmen*. And,

1. How strong a *delusion* must be upon the minds of those men, who have shewn themselves as ready to swallow all the most ridiculous, and groundless stories; as the disciples of *Popery* have been to invent, and propagate them? If one reflects upon what hath passed amongst us of late: one would be apt to think, that the whole conduct of the *machine* for making and distributing *false reports* to the credulous people, had been lodged, and entrusted, with the managers of the *popish cause*, in this kingdom. I forbear to look back farther. It is enough to remember, that *his majesty* had no sooner taken quiet possession of that *throne*, which God hath given *him*, but that all the scandal, and infamy; every thing that could tend to make *himself*, and his *illustrious family*, contemptible, or hateful, was scattered about, with a diligence and zeal almost incredible. No matter how inconsistent; how self-contradictory; how much beyond the common size of credibility; from that day to this, it hath been dealt about, with so uninterrupted an industry, that, I believe, no age ever was witness to so many, and so extravagant inventions of malice, crowded into so short a period of time: and every one of them so visibly, and palpably, framed to serve the *cause of Popery;* and so hugged, and enjoyed, by the *Papists;* (who all the while are laughing at the credulity of their *fellow-labourers*;) that no *Protestants*, of what Church soever, but such as are wilfully, or fatally, blind to their own preser-

vation, could shew that greediness, which hath been observed, in swallowing, and spreading all the *fictions* of their *worst enemies;* and that resolute backwardness to believe the contrary, to which even their own senses might be witnesses. I have an eye particularly now, to that heap of *mean*, and *low calumny*; to that immense number of the most groveling falshoods, (not fit to be mentioned) calculated for the *populace;* some for a week, some for a day, or even for an hour: in order to alienate their affections from their only true interest, and to turn their passions another way.

2. But this alone would not do. The great artifice of the *Romanists*, who are ever obliged, in conscience, to keep our ruin in their eye, hath been to give a false scent to many *Protestants*, who might otherwise join in opposing their constant designs; to turn their jealousies to shadows of their own raising; and, in order to remove their thoughts from real danger, to make them *fear, where no fear is.* And, acting this part, with their usual dexterity, in conjunction with the fire of ambition in *some*, and the consciousness of guilt in *others;* they have had too much success in it, amongst those, who seem little to care what becomes of the *public*, if *themselves* be not pleased in all things.

I shall mention only *one*, or *two*, of the most remarkable instances of this. In order to turn the jealousies of weak men, from their own quarter, upon the *government* itself, it hath been one great piece of their art, to represent all attempts in favour of the *pretender*, as *chimeras*, and impossible imaginations;

and, at the same time, to give assurances to all trusty and faithful friends, that the attempt was certain, and too deeply laid, to miscarry. This, they knew, would be of service to them, two ways. The *one* part of it would keep up the hearts, and spirits, of the friends of his cause; and prepare them for his assistance: nay, and increase their number, and their insolence. And the *other*, would be sure to bring *reproaches* upon any such preparations of defence, as would be absolutely necessary to oppose such an attempt. This was carried farther: even to the charging, or insinuating, designs of *arbitrary power*, to be supported by an army, here at home. So that this was the *hard lot* of those, who had the care of the nation in their trust. If they made no provision for our security, before such an *attempt* was opened; our enemies might the better promise themselves success. And if they did; the same enemies were sure to tax them with such designs, as might fire the *people* against their *rightful* KING: the consequence of which, they well knew, would be, to dispose them the more readily to receive the *pretender*. But what a *delusion* must this be? For, as, on the one side, the greatest enemies of the KING cannot name any one thing that looks like so much as a disposition that way; and, as he hath given *us*, and all *Europe*, the greatest proofs, and the greatest security, of the contrary: so, on the other side, they suffer themselves to be persuaded to throw themselves headlong into the *arms* of *arbitrary power*, under pretence of running from it. For this is certain, that should the *cause* of the *pretender* ever succeed, it is so big with

the miseries of *Popery* and *revenge*, that nothing but *arbitrary power* can possibly support it; nor will it ever trust itself here again, under the influences of *law*, and *liberty*.

But the great, and perhaps the most prevailing; I am sure, the most astonishing, *delusion* of all, is, *that* of those *Protestants*, who suffer the *Papists* to possess them with an imaginary fear about the security of the *Church* of *England*; and then, with blinded eyes, and darkened understandings, to expect its greater security, in the *pretender's* cause. This, I should think enough to cure any *Protestant* of this jealousy; that, from the beginning of that groundless cry, it was very observable that the sons of the *Church* of *Rome*, joined with their loudest zeal and noise, in it. For, what a shameless insult is this upon the common sense of mankind, for *them* to put on an air of concern, and tenderness, for a *Church*, which they not only hate, with an implacable hatred; but which, it is a meritorious part of their religion, to destroy from the earth. I would appeal to any of the most deluded *Protestants*, who will but promise to recollect their thoughts for a moment, whether the *Papists* joining in spreading this jealousy of the danger of a *Church*, which they hate, be not a certain proof, that they think it really in a flourishing condition; much too secure for their designs, and their interest, unless, by such frightful fictions, they can entice *Protestants* themselves to join with them, in its destruction.

It is fruitless to observe to such *Protestants*, unless they will lay aside their strong prejudices against

their own interest, that the worst enemies of the KING, and the *administration*, cannot produce one instance, I will not say, of an injury, but of any disregard, to this *Church*; but might produce many, if they would be so just, of the contrary: as many, as in so short a time could be possibly given. But if they resolve to swallow all the groundless jealousies of this sort; yet, what a degree of infatuation must it be, to think of *security*, where there *can* be none? To fly from the imaginary suspicion, to the real certainty of ruin? To run from those, who, they weakly suspect, *may*; to those, who, they know, *must*, destroy it? Or, is there any new league of strict love and friendship, now made, between the *Church* of *Rome*, and *us*? and tied by closer bonds than *protestations*, and *promises*, which it is their duty, to break, as soon as they can? or, is all the cunning and *policy* of *Rome* sunk at last into this, of furnishing money, and arms; and of hazarding the lives, and the estates, of her true sons, in this nation; out of pure love and kindness to the *Church* of *England*, and solely to establish *that* upon a lasting and strong foundation? Or, do men trust once more to *vows*, and *assurances*? If they do, they trust to what the experience of this nation hath felt to be no security; and what their enemies themselves profess to be none. And, do they think that the number of *Romanists*, who venture their *all* in this world, for the service of the *pretender's* cause, have not had much better *assurances* and *security*, that *their* interest, and *their* religion, is to reign in triumph in this land, before they would engage themselves, in so desperate a

manner? But, I confess, I should not wonder if *they*, who can come to be so deluded, as to think their *Church* secure in the method of *utter destruction*, should come to believe that the *British Papists* are inflamed with a zeal for the *Church* of *England*; and undergo all the fatigues, and hardships, and dangers, of a *rebellion*; not to establish, or serve, *their own Church*, which they love to death; but the *Church* of *England*, which they hate with an immortal hatred. Even *this* may not be too hard for the faith of those, who can trust to any promises and vows of good, or security, to any *Protestant Church* upon earth, from such as cannot, and, indeed, dare not, keep them.

3. The same persons may be *deluded*, if they resolve upon it, by the reproachful word of *foreigners*, and strangers to our laws; and the like; cast upon our *royal family*: without considering, how nearly, and how certainly, they are descended from our KINGS; or, without remembering that *he*, who throws out this reproach, never had any better opportunity, himself, of knowing *us*, or our *laws*; nay, that he hath very particular reasons to hate, and destroy them: that he cannot come, without being followed by a line of *popish princes*, *foreigners*, in every sense; and that neither *he*, nor *they*, will come, without a *religion*, *foreign* and superior to all the *laws* both of God and man.

4. They may, if they please, be *deluded* by the general word, of redressing *grievances*; which yet his *adherents* themselves mention but very sparingly: because they well know that we have no *grievances*,

in *his* eye, but the security of our *constitution*, in *Church*, and *State*; no *grievances*, for *him* to ease us of, but our *laws*, *liberties*, and *religion*. These he sincerely promises us, to remove, And I truly believe, that his religion itself will permit him faithfully to observe such promises.

But I have said enough. I have shewn you, what that *cause* is, and how many evils are contained in it, which is now opened, and avowed, by the friends of the *pretender*. I have considered those *weak pretences*, and *false insinuations*, by which many who call themselves *Protestants*, have been deluded; as they have been managed by the artifices of *popery*, *guilt*, and *resentment*: and, I hope, I have made it appear, that it must be a *fatal delusion* indeed, if they do not see, that to join their *hands* to the efforts of our enemies, in this *cause*, is to hasten to the future ruin of themselves, and their posterity, through a sea of present calamity; that to join their *hearts* and *wishes*, in it, is to call down every curse upon themselves, and all that are to follow them; and that to put on an *indifference*, upon this occasion, is to put it on, in a cause that doth not admit of an *indifference*. It is, indeed, to profess an *indifference* to life, or death; pleasure, or pain; happiness, or misery. And though *they* may inwardly applaud their own wisdom, who cautiously wait for the *event* of things: yet they must remember, that their return to their senses, from this state of indifference, will have but an ungraceful appearance, when all shall be secure; and that little thanks will be due to *them*, (of what sort soever they be,) from their KING or

their *country*, when the danger shall be over, that they have neither opened their mouths, nor lifted up their hands, nor so much as their hearts, against the enemies, not of *us* only, but of all *human society*.

If it should be told, in any part of the earth where the histories of our nation have not been before known; could it possibly be believed, or could it pass for any thing, but an invented *satire* upon human nature; that there is a sort of men in the world, uneasy at their own happiness: either labouring to tear it in pieces, themselves; or, wishing success to those who are engaged in that work; or supinely negligent, cold, and indifferent, what becomes of it: begging a deliverer, in the agony of their distress; and reviling both the deliverer, and deliverance, as soon as it is well accomplished: shaking off fetters, in one generation; and calling for them again, in the next: tiring out heaven itself, with petitions for their own misery; inviting and imploring every evil upon themselves, and their posterity: making loud professions of the most submissive passiveness, under the greatest worldly hardships; and unable to bear even so small a one, as *the want of all power*: speaking much, and often, and zealously, of the security, and flourishing estate, of their *Church*; and, in the same breath, giving it up into the guardianship of *Rome*, whose disciples openly acknowledge themselves bound, in conscience, to destroy it: believing the promises of *those*, who themselves assure them, they are not to be believed; trusting the pretences of *those*, whose religion professeth to destroy at once all

the foundations of trust; and uniting with those, by whom they are sure to be undone, and miserably treated, themselves: *some*, striving and fighting; *some*, wishing and desiring; and *others*, contented, to part with *ease*, *quiet*, *laws*, *liberty*, *property*, *religion*, and all the blessings of government, administered by justice and goodness; and, in their stead, *some*, not opposing, and *others*, contending earnestly, for *chains*, *banishments*, *massacres*, *slavery*; and for every evil, contained in the two great comprehensive engines of misery, unchristian *persecution* in *Church*, and lawless *tyranny* in *State*: and, in order to all this, *some*, taking a pleasure, and *others*, satisfied and easy, to see their native country laid waste, and made a scene of blood, and confusion; and the seat of a *civil war*, which, in its lowest degree, must unavoidably bring along with it many unhappy instances of devastation, and mourning; which God, the righteous Judge, will charge to *their* account, who neither will know their own happiness, nor can bear with that of others: in a word, some openly attempting to destroy, and others not attempting to defend, a *government*, upon which the happiness of their own lives, as well as of their neighbours and posterity, entirely depends; and an administration, which themselves do not charge with any one instance of *illegal* or *arbitrary* proceeding.

If it be possible to cast a veil over the shame of our country; let not this scene of blindness, absurdity, contradiction, and inconsistency, make a part of its history. But if this cannot be hid; let it be told, at the same time, with how steady a greatness

of soul, and how calm a constancy of mind, the KING received the insults, and ungrateful returns, of men; whom he came disposed to make happy: like a rock, unmoved by those waves that dash themselves to pieces against it. Let it be told, with how ready, and sincere, a zeal, his *parliament* hasted to vote every thing for *his*, and the *public* security; with how faithful, and vigilant a care, his *ministers* detected the secret contrivances, and opposed the *open* designs, of his enemies: nor let it be forgot, that, in the midst of all the *madness* of *some*, supported, and increased, by the *indifference* of *others*, there were multitudes of *good subjects*, truly sensible of the invaluable blessings they enjoyed in *him*, and his administration; full of gratitude to heaven for their happiness; and ready to hazard all the concerns of this world, in the defence of it.

May the number of such, daily be seen to increase! As it must do, if all *common sense* be not lost from the earth: and, may *we*, from the principles of conscience, and honour, be of that number! As *we* must be, if we consider what either *conscience*, or *honour*, mean. Let us be just to this *day*, which once was blessed by every *Protestant* mouth in this nation, for the present relief and respite from impending ruin, which it then brought along with it: and which ought now much more to be blessed, as it hath laid the foundation of happiness, not only for us, but the children yet unborn; as we have seen, and now feel, the great end aimed at by it, to be crowned with success; and the mercies that it first conveyed to us, (even every thing we enjoy in

Church, and *State*, and the very possibility of enjoying it), secured against every human attempt, but our own *stupidity*, and *ingratitude*, by the settlement of that *Protestant succession*, which alone could give us any prospect of good.

May Almighty God, the great Governor of all things, watch, in a particular manner, with the eye of his Providence, over those *sacred lives*, upon which all our happiness is suspended! And guard them against every attempt of secret, or open, violence!

May he direct all, to whom the *administration* of affairs is committed, to go on, with wisdom, courage, unanimity, and constancy, to consult, and secure, the public interest! And whether the influences of it reach to our particular concerns, any farther, than as they are mixed with the *public*; whether we taste of its beneficence, any otherwise, than as members of the whole; or not; let us always remember that it is our duty, not to measure our obligations to thankfulness, by any *private* considerations, distinct from the *common good;* but to rejoice, with as much sincerity and zeal, for the inestimable blessing of *public security*, in which *all* partake, as God, and justice, and reason, require, from a *people*, the most happy in the whole world, if they would but know their own happiness! Which, God grant they may, *before it be hid from their eyes!*

BISHOP SHERLOCK'S

ARGUMENTS

AGAINST A

REPEAL OF THE CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS.

THE laws relating to this subject, have not been distinctly considered by the writers upon it. They seem to argue merely upon popular mistakes; and (as it serves their purpose best) sometimes call the Sacrament the Test, and sometimes the qualification for an office; whereas it cannot be both, because there is a real distinction between the Test, and the thing to be testified by it; it is therefore necessary to shew the true design and intent of the legislature in requiring the sacramental Test.

By the 13 Car. II. stat. 2. cap. 1. it is enacted, "That no person shall in any corporation be "elected mayor, alderman, &c. who shall not, "within a year before his election, have taken the "sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the "rites of the Church of England."

By the 25 Car. II. cap. 2. it is enacted, "That "all and every person——that shall bear any office "——civil or military, &c. shall take the oaths of "supremacy and allegiance——and shall also re-"ceive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, accord-

" ing to the usage of the Church of England, &c." and make proof of his having received, as is therein appointed, upon pain of being incapable of the office, and other penalties in the act expressed; this statute is not to extend to inferior offices, as is expressly declared in the last clause.

The latter of these acts is declared, by the act of toleration itself, to extend to protestant dissenters. The former expressly relates to them: and both are declared, 10 Annæ, cap. 2. " to be made for the se-
" curity of the Church of England, as by law estab-
" lished."

These acts then being made for the security of the Church, as by law established; that is, for the security of the ecclesiastical constitution of the realm; the intention, plainly was, to keep non-conformists of all sorts (whose principles and affection to their own ways cannot but lead them to use any power, put into their own hands, to the hurt of the established Church, from which they have separated) out of offices civil and military, and out of the government and direction of corporations. " To the
" end that the succession in such corporations may
" be most probably perpetuated in the hands of
" persons well affected to his majesty and the estab-
" lished government*, and for preservation of the
" public peace, both in Church and State†." Where, it may be observed, " that affection to the established
" government includes a concern for the public
" peace both of Church and State; and that these

* Preamble to Corporation Act. † Ibid. p. 2.

acts, though especially regarding the established Church, are yet, in the sense and eye of the law, acts for the preservation of the established government of these realms; which was always understood to include matters ecclesiastical as well as civil.

It being resolved then by the legislature, that places of power and trust should be in the hands of such only as were well affected to the ecclesiastical constitution; it became necessary to consider, what should be taken as a sufficient proof of any man's being so affected; without this, the provision would have been void and ineffectual, and we should have had a law which could never have been put in execution.

Visible communion with any Church, or society of Christians, is the best proof that man can give to man of his being a well-wisher to the constitution of such Church or society. But then, once or twice going to Church will not amount to such proof, it being well-known, that many, who dislike the constitution of our Church, can permit themselves to be present, now and then, at part, or at all, of the common service. And in all things of this nature, it is impossible to settle the precise number of particular acts, which constitute or denote the habit: in this case therefore the legislature could not say, how often going to Church made a Churchman; or had they named a great number of such acts, as the Test required, it must have been very hard, almost impossible, for the persons concerned to give a legal proof.

The only thing then that remained was to consider, what particular act of Church communion would be the most probable evidence, that a man was sincerely well affected to the established Church.

In this view, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper naturally offered itself; it is that part of religious worship, which the generality of Christians perform with the greatest devotion, and to which they think themselves most obliged to approach with sincerity and uprightness of heart. To this it may be added, that as a distinction was intended to be made between those who approved, and those who did not approve, the ecclesiastical constitution of these kingdoms; so it was well known that the latter had as strong prejudices against the usage of the Church in the celebration of the sacrament, as against any other usage of it whatever, and yet were supposed to have the same awful reverence for the institution itself; so that it was reasonably presumed, that no dissenter, of any sort, would easily be led to such an act of insincerity, as receiving the sacrament in a manner condemned by himself.

It was then enacted, That whoever had an office civil or military, or was to be mayor, &c. of a corporation town, should make sufficient proof of his having received, within a certain time prescribed, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, "according to "the rites of the Church of England," as it is limited 13 Car. II. "according to the usage of the "Church of England," as it is expressed 25 Car. II.

1. It must be here observed, that barely receiving

the sacrament, is not the Test required by the act: every man, as a Christian, is supposed to receive it somewhere, and therefore barely receiving the sacrament could be no Test of any man's affection to the ecclesiastical constitution of this kingdom. But the Test lies chiefly upon these words, "according to "the usage and rites of the Church of England:" and it was supposed, that no man would in such manner receive it, but a member of the Church of England.

2. That receiving the sacrament, "according to "the usage of the Church of England," is not the qualification for an office, within the intent of the act, but only the proof of such qualification: the qualification required is, That the person—be well affected to the ecclesiastical state and constitution of these realms; and the receiving the sacrament, according to the rites of the established Church, is the proof or Test required, that he is so.

This is so clearly the case, that a man may receive the sacrament, so as to give proof of the qualification made necessary by the Corporation Act, without knowing, or even suspecting, that he was then giving a Test required by law; for that act appoints the receiving to be within one year before election to an office: so that one who receives the sacrament, not dreaming that he may, or shall be elected to an office; yet if he is elected to an office within a year, such receiving shall stand and be accepted as the Test required.

This is plain, I say, from the view of the acts; but

to put a matter of such consequence, in the present debate out of doubt, I must refer the reader to the 3 Jac. I. cap. 4. The first act, I think, (though I pretend not to have carefully examined this particular) that brought in a sacramental Test.

The reason for it is set forth in these words,— "And whereas divers persons, popishly affected, do "nevertheless the better to cover and hide their "false hearts, and with the more safety to attend "the opportunity to execute their mischievous de- "signs, repair sometimes to Church, to escape the "penalty of the laws in that behalf provided—For "the better discovery of such persons, &c. Be it "enacted—That every popish recusant—who shall "conform—and repair to the Church, shall once "in every year at least—receive the sacrament."—

Here it is evident, that receiving the sacrament is required only as a Test of conformity; for this act does not require any thing more in popish recusants than conformity; which was the very thing by which before they became qualified for the advantages of English subjects. This act therefore introduces no new qualification, but requires a stronger proof or Test of the old one.

The same thing appears yet more expressly by 7 Jac. I. cap. 2. "Forasmuch as naturalizing stran- "gers, and restoring to blood persons attainted, "have been ever reputed matters of mere grace "and favour, which are not fit to be bestowed upon "any others than such as are of the Religion now "established in this realm."———

Here, you see, the qualification for such favour is, that the person, to have the grant, shall be of the Religion established:

"Be it therefore enacted," says the statute, "that "no person——shall be naturalized or restored in "blood——unless he has received the Sacrament "——within one month before any bill exhibited "for that purpose." That is, Be it enacted, that he shall receive the sacrament——in order to prove his being of the established Religion.

Upon the whole, it is very plain, that the receiving the sacrament was never esteemed a qualification in our law, but a proof and Test of that qualification (namely, conformity to the Church established), which the law in many cases requires. Thus the case stands upon the foot of these laws.

I have heard much and just complaint of the iniquity of men, who have come to the holy sacrament, without devotion, nay sometimes with open contempt of it, merely to satisfy the letter of these laws; but the legislature cannot be charged with establishing guilt and hypocrisy by a law. Have they, who think otherwise, never, in the course of their lives, received the sacrament, in order to give that Test which these laws require? If they have, I desire they would tell the world, whether, when they so received, they did it in remembrance only that some preferment only was bestowed on them, and without remembrance of the death of Christ, or no. If they shall answer for themselves, that they received with no other sentiments than what are agreeable to, and ought to attend upon, the celebra-

tion of this institution of Christ; why then are the laws accused, as perverting the end and use of the institution, since the law and the end of the institution may, and ought to be, complied with at the same time? But if they did really receive with those worldly views, which they charge the laws with introducing, I heartily lament their case, and wish they may never be called on to answer to One greater, than is on earth.

It is worth observing here, that the argument urged in this case is just as strong against the use of oaths; which ought not, upon these principles, to be required as a Test of a man's veracity, because thereby they become an instrument, by means of which, some particular sort of men (especially atheists and infidels) get into estates, the titles to which are determined on oath. And the legislature may as justly be charged with all the perjury of corrupt witnesses, as with the hypocrisy of corrupt communicants.

The two questions which naturally arise from the true state of the case are these.

1. Whether it be lawful to confine offices of power and trust in the government, to such as are obedient and well affected to the ecclesiastical state and constitution of the realm?

2. Supposing this to be lawful, whether it be also lawful to require of any man, who is willing to accept an office civil or military, that he should communicate with the established Church, and particularly, that he should receive the sacrament, "according to the usage of it," in order to prove such

his obedience and good affection to the ecclesiastical constitution?

It ought here to be observed, that receiving the sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England is not appointed to be a Test of any thing, but what it always ought (whether required by law or no) to be a Test of: receiving the sacrament, &c. is not a Test of a man's being a willing member of the established Church, in force, or in consequence of the law; but in force and in consequence of that sincerity, which ought always to attend it; and this presumption, that he who receives in the Church is of the Church, is the ground and foundation, and not the effect of the law. So, in the parallel case, an oath is not appointed by law to be a Test of a man's veracity, but it is required in some cases by law, because it is in its own nature, such a Test.

Men are not supposed to be of one Church, and communicate with another. Upon this presumption the Corporation and Test Acts are founded: they require the evidence of a man's receiving the sacrament, according to the usage of the Church of England, only to prove, that he is a member of that Church. They leave the sacrament to the uses for which it is ordained; and lay hold on the act of receiving, only as an evidence of a man's being in communion of that Church, in which he receives.

When the doctrine of occasional conformity for places prevailed, it broke in upon this evidence, just as the doctrine of equivocation and mental reservation broke in upon the evidence of an oath; and there was the same reason for the legislature to take

notice of and prevent the one abuse as the other. The act against occasional conformity (as it is commonly called) does not forbid occasional conformity as such, but leaves all men to the same liberty they had before, to communicate occasionally with the Church; and therefore it is nothing to the purpose to consider whether occasional conformity be a lawful or unlawful practice. All that the legislature intended by that statute, was to prevent their being imposed on by the act of the occasional conformist. They required the evidence of a man's receiving according to the usage of the Church of England, as a proof of his being of that communion. The act of an occasional conformist in receiving, &c. came up to the letter of the law, and yet was no proof of what they required.

When experience had shewn, how easily the law was evaded by the practice of occasional conformists, the legislature took care to prevent the abuse, and to provide that men in office, &c. should no longer continue in their offices, than they adhered to the communion of the established Church: that is, that they should perform the condition required by the former laws, and for the performance of which they were understood to give the assurance and evidence of their having received the sacrament, according to the usage of the Church of England.

And this shews that a better or stronger Test was was not to be found; for when this was evaded, the legislature had nothing to add to it, and could only by an after-provision secure it against a practice, which was an open affront to the law of the country.

The occasional bill, therefore, is only a guard to the Test Act; and those, who plead for the repeal of this bill only, do in effect desire, that all men may be at liberty to give the proof required by the law, of their adherence to the established Church, and yet be at liberty not to adhere to it. Whether this can proceed from a concern for sincerity, or for the honour of the Gospel institution, I leave the world to judge.

As to the abuses brought in by the iniquity of men, who approach the holy table merely to answer the letter of these laws, without any piety or devotion, or true sense of what they are doing; I see them, and I lament them; and they are sad instances of the decay of the spirit of Christianity among us: but still, I say, these men are not made wicked by the law; but being wicked, they abuse as well the law of their country, as the institution of the Gospel: and if the iniquity of men in abusing any law be sufficient reason for abrogating such law; I would fain know what law ought to stand in force. What perjuries, what frauds, what cheats are made use of to elude the many laws for imposing customs on trade! Will any man turn advocate for the removal of these laws also? Will any man say, that no temporal advantage or convenience to the State, can justify the great abuse of religion, and the manifest breach of plain duties occasioned by these laws? Will any man plead for abolishing the use of oaths, since perjury is not a more crying, than it is a common sin?

The profanation of the Lord's Supper creates a horror in every serious Christian mind; and God

forbid that any word should drop from me, as if I could be easy and contented in seeing so much hypocrisy and wickedness. This is a case which wants a remedy; but as the laws requiring the sacramental Test do not make men wicked and profane; so neither will removing those laws make them pious or holy. The remedy must be applied to the men; it is the wickedness of the receiver that calls for correction; and no service is done to Religion, by beating down the authority both of Church and State to preserve true Religion, in an age that seems to want it so very much.

In the mean while I will go on to declare my sense in this matter, and the reasons on which it is founded; hoping, that it may be at least as inoffensive for me, to endeavour to justify the laws of my country; as it is for others to arraign and to condemn them. And should all I say prove to be vain words, and of none effect; should I see the Church left naked and defenceless; its walls broken down, and the hedge, which was placed about it, pulled up; yet my fruitless pains should yield me this satisfaction, that I laboured for the peace of Jerusalem; nor shall any man be able to suggest, that I was bribed by the prospect of honours and preferments.

The questions arising from the true state of this case, are (as I before observed) two.

The first is this:

I. Whether it be lawful to confine offices of power and trust in the government to such as are obedient and well affected to the ecclesiastical state and constitution of the realm?

This question will be determined by the resolution of two points.

1. Whether it be lawful in any case to make laws, by which some persons shall be rendered incapable of offices?

2. Whether it be reasonable in the case before us?

There is nothing that more nearly affects the good and welfare of every government; and consequently, nothing that ought to be it's more immediate care, than to see the powers (which must necessarily in every community be trusted somewhere) placed in proper hands. Every man has an interest in desiring that there should be upright judges to execute the laws already in force; and wise, prudent, disinterested men, to make new laws, or abrogate old ones, as the good of the whole shall require. It is a right vested in every community as such, to consider and declare what conditions and qualifications shall be required in all persons to be admitted to offices of trust and power in the government: and therefore, a capacity to serve the public in places of trust and power, which is not limitable by the constitution, when there are just reasons to limit it, is such a capacity as is inconsistent with all forms of government in the world. As men in a state of nature (for I am willing to argue upon that hypothesis) are upon a foot of equality; so are they when they enter into a formed government, and lay equal claim to all the advantages arising from thence. Say then that all, considered merely as members of the society, have a claim to be equally capable of serving

the public: yet still this is such a capacity as nature herself has set bounds and limits to, by the very distinction she has made in the natural parts and abilities of men. It requires wise men to manage the public concerns, and men of courage to conduct the public arms: it is therefore necessary to exclude fools from the council board, and cowards from the army. This, I say, is a limitation made by nature.

But it equally concerns the public to have men well affected to the government in places of power and trust. A courageous man, who hates his country, is at least as unfit to be trusted with the military force, as a coward; and a wise man, who would betray his prince, ought rather to be excluded from his councils, than a fool. The consequence of which is, that either no government has a right to preserve itself against the disaffection of any subject; or else, that every government has a right to exclude from offices of power and trust such as shall render themselves justly suspected of disaffection to the public.

To talk then in the present case of the common rights of subjects, is begging the question; and supposing that dissenters are excluded without any reason; which is making a short case of it indeed. The true point is this: allowing all subjects to be equally capable, as such, of serving the public, and that the government ought not to limit this capacity without good reason; to enquire whether the Corporation and Test Acts are founded upon reasons sufficient to justify the legislature, in the limitations by them made on this capacity of some subjects.

Reasonings from the common rights of subjects, and general declarations against debarring men from their civil rights, are arguments which do by no means come up to the present purpose.

A submission of private rights to the public is the fundamental article of government; and therefore no subject has a right to defend even his life, or property, as he thinks fit, but must go in the method prescribed or permitted by the law. How absurd it is then to talk of a right to be capable of places, not subject to the like restraints or limitations! The matter is not mended by calling this a natural right (a phrase much in fashion), for there is no natural right that may not be lost, in whole or in part. Nay, some rights are restrained merely for the sake of public convenience, without supposition of any fault or transgression in any member of the community.

There is not, I presume, a stronger natural right, than the right to food and raiment; this is founded in the common necessity of nature; and it is not to be thought that God sent men into the world merely to starve, without giving them a right to use in common so much of it as their necessities require. But now we see that this right is limited and restrained by all governments in the world: property is secured every where by human laws, and a very unequal division of the good things of life is introduced; the far greater part of mankind live upon their labour, or by charity: hard as this is, yet the necessity of government justifies the provision; and an apostle of Christ has given us a rule in consequence of

it: "If any man will not work, neither let him "eat."

Is it lawful then to restrain the natural right that every man has to food and raiment? And is it unlawful to limit the capacity which subjects have to places of power and trust in the government? There is indeed so much compassion and equity left for cases of natural necessity, that, in the last extremity, we still say, necessity has no law; but it must be a sad world, whenever avarice and the lust of power obtain the same privilege.

Our opponents perhaps will say, that they do not plead against restraints of this sort in general, but that they confine themselves solely to the sacramental Test, and to cases where religion is concerned.

But let the reader take notice, that the argument against the sacramental Test, drawn from the right of all subjects to a capacity of holding offices of power and trust, is an argument against this Test, considered as a limitation of that right; and it is founded in this, or in nothing, that all such limitations are unlawful: for if all are not unlawful, perhaps this may not be unlawful; and consequently no argument can lie against it, considered merely as such a limitation.

Among all the capacities of this sort known in our constitution, those which are hereditary are the strongest and most favoured by the law. Among these, the capacity of succeeding to the crown is the most sacred. This many have taken pains to prove subject to limitations; and it is well known that his

majesty enjoys the crown, in virtue of such limitations. I would only ask, whether the royal family be the only one in the kingdom liable to such restrictions? Whether it be highly reasonable, for the sake of public good, to limit the capacity of succeeding to the crown, and highly unreasonable, though there be the like occasion for it, to limit the capacity of private men to be captains or colonels?

To me this case is so very plain, that I will not so far suspect any reader's judgment, as to dwell longer on it; but will go on to consider in what manner this right, which the State has over the capacity of all its subjects, is to be exercised.

They, who in any nation have the legislative power entrusted with them, are bound to take care of the welfare and preservation of the community over which they are placed. Men ought not to be punished for any offence against the public, without plain proof that they have offended; for all punishments must follow the strict rules of justice: but all governments have a right (and all wise governments make use of it) to provide against probable dangers to the State; in consequence of which they have a right to provide, that all power in the State shall be lodged in such hands only as they reasonably judge to be well affected: and here the rules of prudence must govern. It may be very consistent to declare against punishing men in their lives or fortunes for those reasons, which, nevertheless, are good reasons for excluding them from places of power and trust. It would be very unreasonable to beat a man, because he has an infectious distemper; yet it is very

reasonable to deny him a place in the family, upon this account; for in one case I should injure him, in the other I only take care of myself. The exercise then of this right is matter of prudence in the government. It may be abused by wantonness and partiality, as every thing else may, that ever I heard of; but it will not follow, because this right may be abused, that therefore there neither is, nor ought to be, any such right in the community.

But the right of the State to limit the subjects' capacity of holding places of power and trust being supposed; it still remains to be considered, whether they had sufficient reason for what they did, in the case before us.

The government of England is in the hands of Christians; and so far, I hope, there is no fault. When they, in whom this power was lodged, found it necessary to forsake the errors of the Church of Rome, and to throw off the heavy yoke of popish power, under which they had been long oppressed; they saw at the same time, that religion could not be preserved, without some settled order and discipline. And though the reformation claimed the use of the Scriptures, as the undoubted right of every Christian who was capable of using them; yet they had sense enough to know, that to leave every man to make the best of his Bible, without any farther direction or restraint, would naturally tend to confusion, and fill the kingdom with all the wild conceits that ignorance and enthusiasm could produce. They considered farther, that it was the will of Christ, that there should be a visible Church; and though they had

withdrawn from the Church of Rome, as being corrupt, yet they were obliged to visible communion; for these reasons they continued the national Church, freed from the errors and the corruptions of Rome, under a government and discipline formed upon the platform of primitive Christianity. This Church was established by law; and the people of England were bound to communion with it, as Christian subjects; so bound, I mean, that nothing but a persuasion of errors and corruptions in the Church, could excuse a separation from it.

Upon these principles, the reformation here proceeded; the crown and the people found it necessary to reject the papal power, together with the corruptions of the Romish Church; but they found it necessary too to preserve an authority in Church matters; and to settle an ecclesiastical government even for the better reformation of religion. Some indeed there were in the early days of the reformation, who pleaded for Christian liberty in such manner, as to leave no room for Christian discipline; but these made no great figure, and were esteemed then as mere fanatics. Had they, who conducted the reformation, set out upon these prejudices (for I desire to be excused from calling them principles), by this time I verily believe Christianity itself had been lost among us; and the supremacy vested in every man, in his own behalf, had long since established a consummate stupidity and ignorance; but who would have been the happier for it, I profess myself at a loss to imagine.

The protestant Church of England has enjoyed

but little peace from its first establishment. In the days of Edw. VI. the controversy about vestments, &c. began; though it was managed with another kind of spirit, than what afterwards appeared in that cause. In Queen Mary's time, this Church was destroyed; and suffered not only in the ruin of its establishment, and in the members lost by persecution; but in those also, who fled from home, and brought back those notions, which have given this Church and nation so much trouble ever since. These were one great occasion of the disturbances in Queen Elizabeth's reign: to what height they were carried, and how they affected the peace of those times, the reader may see in Archbishop Whitgift's Life, published by our diligent and learned historian, the Reverend Mr. Strype. Under the management of James I. the disaffection to the established Church grew strong; and in the days of his unfortunate son, a prince who deserved a better fate, it prevailed as well against the crown as the mitre.

It is very true, that religion was not the whole of that unhappy rupture between the king and his people; occasion there was for complaint with respect to civil rights; nor is it my intention to dissemble here, what the noble historian of those times has so freely and so impartially disclosed: but then it is evident to all, that those disputes had ended in the happy confirmation of the subjects' rights, had not the pretences of religion and enthusiasm mixed themselves in the quarrel, and put the nation into such a fever, that nothing but the loss of blood could recover them again to their cool senses.

It is with reluctance that I enter into this part of the argument; and I wish I could draw a curtain before the oppressions and calamities which the nation suffered under, in that long hour of darkness. But should I be silent, yet almost every gentleman's family wears still the scars of that frenzy; and can name the ancestor who lost his life, the estate that was sequestered, the house that was pillaged or pulled down: and this too was acted under the pretence of making way for the free profession of the Gospel; of which however there was hardly any visible sign in the kingdom, except only this, "That our kings "were bound in chains, and our nobles with links "of iron."

After more than twelve years of continual night, the day began to break, and the sound of liberty was heard throughout the nation: in a word, the king who was expelled, the nobles and the gentry who were driven into banishment, or lived at home sequestered, or imprisoned, were restored to their ancient rights; and England became England again. What now was the consequence? Why, the cruelties, the oppressions, and devastations of many years, were all buried in silence and oblivion: private resentments and private injuries were given up to the public good; the rich sequestrator and the harrassed gentleman lived like neighbours and friends; and the prophecy seemed fulfilled, That the lion and the lamb should play together. The only redress which the king and his people sought for all their wrongs, was to guard themselves from falling into the same mischiefs again; for this purpose expressly the Corporation Act was

made, " For prevention (as the words of the Act are) " of the like mischief for the time to come, and for " preservation of the public peace both in Church " and State:" that act which is now thought to be an invasion of the subjects rights, and contrary to the maxims of Christ Jesus. And yet, in the name of all that ever was called Christian charity, what less could be done? Was it so extremely wicked to guard against injury and oppression? Was it so irreligious to defend that religion which the nation received as delivered by Christ, from force and violence; and to suppress the many kinds of injustice practised on this people; and which would sound too harshly, should they be distinctly enumerated? Self-defence is a darling topic with many, and I desire them to shew, that in this act any thing was done by the gentlemen of the Church of England, which they had not found by woful experience to be necessary for their preservation. The general pardon was so far from producing the desired effect, that it is declared by the legislature as the ground of the Corporation Act, " That notwithstanding all his majesty's " endeavours and unparalleled indulgence in par- " doning all that is past, nevertheless many evil " spirits are still working."

This then was the case in fact: the crown, the nobility, the gentry and the clergy of England had suffered for above twelve years under such oppression and cruelty, as will be easily called to mind, by the reader; and which I have no inclination to aggravate, or to describe: and when the government returned to its natural channel again, all was forgiven;

and Christian charity triumphed over every thing, but the restless spirit of some among us; which since the mercy and good nature of the nation could not subdue, it became necessary that their wisdom and prudence should prevent; for these reasons the Corporation Act was made, to keep the power out of those hands which had used it so very ill: this I say was the case; and let heaven and earth judge of the equity of the proceedings.

But however justifiable this might be upon the close of the troubles, and whilst things continued to be in agitation; yet perhaps it will be said, that now the case is altered; the disaffection to the Church is abated; and we have nothing to fear from dissenters, though places of power and trust in the government should be lodged in their hands. I wish this were all true; and am willing to allow that there are many among them who are sincere in their professions of moderation. But alas! it is one thing to say how we would use power, if we had it, and another to know how to use it when we have it. But to let this pass: have any of the dissenters declared, that they are for maintaining the Church as by law established? No certainly: the utmost that has been pleaded in their behalf, is, "That their principles—amount to those of "a general toleration of all peaceable subjects *." I rejoice in this happy reformation of their principles; but let me ask the gentlemen of South Britain, what they are like to get by accepting of a toleration for their religion, instead of an establishment; and

* The Dissenters Reasons, by Mr. Peirce, pag. 33.

that too limited to the condition of being peaceable subjects; a condition indeed highly reasonable in itself; but which may be easily expounded away: and probably would be so, unless they could appear to be highly satisfied with their hard bargain. Besides, this declaration for toleration stands only upon the authority of the Dissenters' Address to the King; an authority they are not willing to abide by in all cases; and never more complain than when they are pressed with a like argument, founded upon their addresses to James the Second.

The dissenters are still fond of their own principles and opinions: and we have once seen how that fondness transported them, when power was in their hands. Why then are we not to suppose, that they would use power again, if put into their hands, to set up what they account pure religion; and to expel, what not only they, but others of higher rank, and under great obligations to the Church, have treated as popish and superstitious?

It is well known, that in the late times, there was a solemn league and covenant entered into by many, to root out the established Church of England, and never more to permit its return. At the restoration, some there were, who left their livings rather than depart from the terms of this engagement. Has their steady adherence to these obligations been blamed or condemned by their brethren of these times? No; so far from it, that they have laboured to adorn the lives and characters of these men; their sufferings for this cause have been magnified and extolled; and they have been represented to the public,

as confessors suffering for righteousness sake; as lights shining in the dark, and of whom the world was not worthy. And now let any body draw the natural consequence from this: is it reasonable to think, that those who have consecrated their forefathers' zeal to destroy the established Church, and offered up so much incense to it in the eye of the world, do themselves condemn those principles, which they so adore in others?

It has of late years been a prevailing opinion among some members of the Church of England, that the dissenters had worn off their rigid zeal against the Church, and that there was little more left in the controversy than the difficulty about re-ordination, and the dispute about some indifferent rites and ceremonies. But we have been told, how highly affronting to the dissenters such an opinion of them is. "How could you suggest (says one of "them) that we don't so much as pretend the terms "of your communion are sinful *?" And he goes on to give instances of sinful terms in our communion; and then in the name of all his brethren he passes a judgment that makes the whole ecclesiastical constitution sinful: "You may depend upon it, that the "great body of the dissenters judge the terms of "communion to be sinfully imposed." P. 6. This strikes not at one, or at many of our terms of communion, but at the whole establishment; the foundation itself is sin, and nothing good can be raised on it: and therefore he very frankly and consistently

* The Dissenters Reasons, &c. by James Peirce, p. 5.

declares, p. 30. "We rejoice to see the foundations "shaken, and the fabric sinking, as we never doubted "but it would some time or other." What hopes, what triumphs are these!——But to go on: he charges the Church, p. 24. with persecution; and represents the dissenters, as the holy remnant "who "have not bowed the knee to Baal." P. 38. So that the Church of England in this comparison, (and it should seem therefore in this gentleman's opinion) is an idolatress, and her priests are the priests of Baal.

The Church of England owns itself to be subject to the civil power, in making canons and constitutions for external government and discipline; whether the State has reason to like the Church the worse for this, let others judge. But those who are offended at it, may assure themselves they shall have no such reason of complaint against the dissenters; they pretend to a power and discipline equally great and extensive with that claimed or used by the established Church; they claim it too independently of the State in every respect, for they claim it all as the law of Christ, over which no human power has authority. "The government we plead for, says "Mr, Peirce, is no other than the execution of the "laws of Christ." P. 22, 23. And since this is their opinion, I'll venture to say for them, that it is likewise their opinion, that no power on earth can restrain them in the exercise of any part of that government, which they plead for. And without the spirit of prophecy, it is easily foreseen, that if ever they have the rule, their little finger will be thicker

than the loins of the Church: the holiness of their government, its being the execution of the laws of Christ, must make them (whatever they now think) zealous to impose it on all.

This gentleman has the repute of being one of the most considerable among the dissenters; and takes upon himself to speak in the name of the rest. I should not have wondered had one of their ignorant mechanics represented the Clergy of England as priests of Baal; but it is surprising to hear this from a man of letters, from one who has had opportunities of conversing both with men and books; and it is an intimation at least, what purposes are to be served by that power, to which some are now so eagerly pleading their right. And let every man, who wishes well to the Church of England, judge from hence, what he is to expect, if ever offices of power and trust are lodged in dissenters' hands. Will they permit, do you think, the priests of Baal to live unmolested, or will they endure that the Church of England, whose foundation is sin, should be permitted to stand? No; then they would tell us, that they have no power to remit the laws of Christ; this was not their meaning:

Non hæc in fœdera.

If dissenters want only to propagate their persuasion, by applying to the reason and understanding of men, they are even now at liberty to do it; and if they can convince the nation that their cause is right, it will give them an influence beyond what the repeal of twenty acts in their behalf can do. Let

them then go to work in God's name, we are ready to hear and to consider their arguments. But if they want to back their arguments with power, however we are bound to attend to reason, we certainly have a right to guard against force; and to secure ourselves from having any thing, as Religion, imposed on us. For these reasons, and chiefly for the sake of that experience which we have had, we cannot agree to call for a repeal of these acts: they are acts founded on the principles of self-defence; and not made to exclude Christians from civil offices, for the sake of their conscientious scruples. And if there be no difference between persecuting a man for his opinions, and securing myself from being persecuted for my own; then indeed it is a persecution to exclude men, for the sake of their disaffection to the established Church, from civil power. Persecution is an hard word, but when it comes from words to blows, it is an harder thing. The Church of England has felt it; and she has a short memory, if she has already forgot what it is. It is indeed as bad as it can be described to be; and so far am I from being an advocate for it, as I have been publicly and often charged to be; that I can with a clear mind say, I have ever pleaded against it.

But surely, it must be agreed on all hands, that every man has a right (much more every government) to secure himself against persecution, and from having any thing, as Religion, imposed on him by undue means. And once more I call upon the reader to recollect what passed in those sad days, when all the sects among us were labouring for supe-

riority, and making their way over the heads and consciences of their brethren; and when he has thought thereon, let him say, (if he sees reason) that to exclude men from power on account of those persuasions in Religion, which produced so much misery and confusion in these kingdoms, is an unjust or false security, and contrary to the maxims of Christ. But if he is not in great haste to come to a conclusion, let him consider, that what has been already, may probably be expected again from the same causes; and that power in the hands of dissenters has once already ruined Church and State. If he thinks they are now grown friends to toleration, and is moved by that argument, yet let him ask himself the reason, why he should give up an establishment, to accept of a toleration; and why toleration is not as good, when it is granted to dissenters, as when it is humbly received at their hands. Let him also consider, that where the dissenters's principles prevail, no toleration is granted: the Kirk has ever protested against it, and used their utmost endeavours to prevent it. If he thinks much weight is to be laid upon their late declarations for general toleration; let him remember that the same pleas were used before King Charles the First's time, and yet what were Church or Nation the better for them? In a word, let him consider, whether under these uncertainties, it is not wisest to trust himself with the liberty of his own conscience. Whether he may not be as sure of shutting out persecution (if that be the concern) by keeping it in his

own power to grant a free toleration to those who differ from him, as by putting it in the power of others to make him the like grant.

They who display so much zeal against all limitations of offices to members of the Church established, would do well to remember, that the crown itself is subject to this very limitation. By 12, 13 Will. III. cap. 2. it is provided, "That whosoever "shall hereafter come to the possession of this "crown, shall join in communion with the Church "of England as by law established."

Let the world be informed, how it comes to pass, that the Kings of England have less privilege than any of their subjects; and why that very limitation is just and expedient when applied to the crown, which is so great an oppression, so subversive of natural right, when applied to any of the people.

The crown has the disposal of places of power and trust in the government; and the incapacity for offices which some lie under, in virtue of the Test Act, is in truth a restraint upon the crown in bestowing of offices. And as long as it is thought necessary for the preservation of the established Religion, to confine the crown itself to the communion of the Church of England, so long it cannot be unreasonable to confine the crown from deriving power into such hands as there is reason to think would destroy it. Nay, the very reason for confining the crown to the communion of the Church of England, is to secure the powers of the government which are lodged in the crown, on the side of the establishment; and it seems preposterous to suppose, that

any power should issue from the crown so confined, into hands not well affected to the Church.

I do not find that any one, who argues for the repeal of these laws, does so much as pretend to complain of them with respect to the restraint, which they bring on the crown in the disposal of offices. Nor indeed can any body justly do it; for his majesty's declared affection to our constitution in Church and State, will never permit him to think any law a burden to himself, which is made for the preservation of public peace both in Church and State.

But with respect to the limitation which requires that "the person possessing the crown shall join in "communion with the Church of England as by "law established; it may, perhaps, be said, that there is a difference in the case, because the receiving the sacrament as a Test, and giving evidence thereof, is not required of the Crown. 'Tis true, it is not; and the reason of the difference is this; in the case of private men, the public cannot judge what communion they belong to; and therefore a proof, a Test of their communion with the Church established, is required of them: but a king is a public person, and lives in the eye of all his subjects; and it is as easy to know of any king what communion he belongs to, as what kingdom he governs; and consequently no particular Test of joining in communion need be required.

I would observe here (what some seem very desirous to forget) that one great end of the revolution was to secure and preserve the Church established; and that to labour to hurt this Church, cannot be a

mark of friendship to the revolution. I have turned over the writings of my opponents, to see whether this part of the argument in the behalf of the revolution has had any improvement under their hands; and to my great surprise, I cannot find they have once had it in their thoughts: they talk indeed of religious rights preserved or restored by the revolution; but they plainly mean such rights as they now plead for; such as are inconsistent with the establishment of any Church; except perhaps the Church of England *truly* so called, (as one of them speaks); and what kind of Church that is, neither I, (nor I believe) they can tell: for if the Church of England commonly so called, is not the Church of England truly so called, then the Church of England truly so called, is some Church not yet established; and what it may be, who can tell?

The legislature knows no religious rights, but what are contained in the establishment of the Church of England; and therefore the lords and commons tell King William, that after the settlement of the crown on himself, &c. in his first year, "his ma-"jesty's good subjects were restored to the full and "free possession and enjoyment of their religion, "rights and liberties." 12, 13 Will. III. cap. 2. They knew of no religious rights restored by the settlement of the crown on King William, &c. but what are implied in the people's being restored to the free enjoyment of their religion, as professed in the established Church.

In a word; if all governments in the world have a right to defend themselves as well against their

own subjects, as others; and in consequence thereof, to provide, that the powers of the constitution should be lodged in such hands only, as are well affected to the establishment: if all men have a right to guard their own consciences against the force of such as would impose that for Religion, which they do not approve; and if it be reasonable to suppose, that those who have once attempted, and succeeded in their attempt, to use their fellow subjects in such manner, are ready to do it again when they have power: and lastly, if it be justifiable to limit the crown to the communion of the Church established, in order to secure and preserve the Church; it is upon all these reasons justifiable to confine offices of power and trust to the hands of such as are well affected to the ecclesiastical establishment of this realm; and the statutes which do so confine them are not chargeable with oppression, but are founded in the highest reason; the security and preservation of our constitution.

But besides all this, there is one consideration more arising from the very nature of our constitution, that makes the Test with respect to corporations highly reasonable. 'Tis well known what an influence the corporations have in one part of the legislature; there are instances where a very few subjects in a little town are represented in parliament by as many members as the largest county chooses; and this being the constitution, it concerns the whole to take particular care that corporations be under the government and direction of such as are friends to the whole; and to guard those posts especially, which

if the adversary possessed, it would make one of them become equal in strength to a thousand. The natural strength of any constitution lies in the affection of the people to it; and it may be allowed, that the ecclesiastical establishment (as far as it is in its nature changeable by human laws) ought to be agreeable to the sense of the nation; but no common sense will allow that the little towns of a county ought to govern the consciences of a county; and therefore since many little towns have by our constitution (of which it is not my intent to complain) such an influence, there is nothing more reasonable, than to provide that such only as are friends to the establishment in Church and State, should have the direction of them. Either this is reasonable, or else it is reasonable to affirm, that the constitution in Church and State ought not to be what the nation likes, but what the towns corporate shall think proper for them.

This consideration may be made more general, and extended to other offices in the State; for though there are many offices which men might execute, without being thereby enabled immediately to hurt the constitution; yet the influence which such offices give in the election of parliament men (a power which accrues not from the particular nature of the office, but from the nature of our constitution) makes it reasonable, that such offices should be confined to the friends of the constitution in Church and State: this, I say, is in some degree the case in general; but it more evidently appears in the case of corporation offices.

The nonconformists of all sorts (including papists as well as others) were computed to be in proportion to the members of the Church of England, in the year 1676, as one to twenty: a number in proportion too small to have any natural strength to hurt the constitution; but if they were at liberty, and should apply themselves heartily to gain the corporations, they might soon get such strength as might make them formidable; whilst others, relying upon their numbers, sat securely by. Whether this advantage in these circumstances ought to be given to the one, the twenty, I think, have a very good right to judge.

The case of the corporations, and the influence they have in one part of the legislature, ought to be well considered, by such especially, as seem willing to part with the Test as far as it affects corporations, and to preserve it with respect to other officers. If it be reasonable to keep any power out of the dissenters' hands; that power certainly which gives them an influence in the legislature, in making laws for Church and State, ought especially to be kept from them. And it must upon the least reflection appear very strange, to advance a man to a share in making laws for the nation, and yet to deny him all other power.

Were the dissenters fewer in number than they are; were they one to a thousand, yet I should think it unreasonable and unlawful to endeavour to end the difference by force. And so far am I from disliking the indulgence allowed them, that I like the establishment itself the better for this abatement in the rigour

of its laws. But if peace and security of conscience will not satisfy, without power and authority in the State, it ought to be no offence to them to be told, that we owe a regard to our own consciences, as well as theirs; and that though we rejoice in their liberty, yet we see no reason to part with our own security.

I have hitherto spoken of the Corporation and Test Acts in general, and the reasons on which they are founded. There will want but little to be said of the 25 of Charles II. in particular; and that only in respect of an objection which concerns that act.

This act when it was made related particularly to papists; and they who can distinguish between a man's Religion, and the certain, necessary effects of it, can see, without doubt, the reasonableness of a Test, or any other disqualification of it in this view. For my own part, as far as the argument for persecution is concerned, I make no difference between one religion and another; and can as little justify hanging a papist, merely for his Religion, as a protestant. If therefore the Test Act be in truth a persecuting law, it is bad in every view; but if it be only a reasonable provision for the security of the establishment against suspected enemies; it is good in every case, where there is probable ground for such suspicion.

I need not say, how much the nation is indebted to this act; it has once already saved us from the power of popery; and was a barrier to the Protestant Religion in all King James's reign: this was so evident, that there was nothing this unhappy prince

laboured so much, as the repeal of this act; and when he could not get an English parliament to concur with him, he took a bold step to compass his design, and endeavoured to lay it asleep by a dispensing power. His declaration to this purpose is upon record in the annals and histories of that time; and if the reader will be at the trouble to turn to it, he will find that our opponents have been beholden to King James's declaration, for their arguments against the Test.

But this act being designed for papists in particular, it has been complained of, that it was extended to protestant dissenters; though it is well known, that this effect was foreseen at the time of making the act, and might have easily been prevented, had the legislature intended to prevent it. But let this pass; it cannot be denied, that this effect upon protestant dissenters was understood at the time the Toleration Act passed, and yet so far were the legislature from preventing it then, that they expressly declared all protestant dissenters to be liable to it. Which declaration was indeed re-enacting of the Test Act with respect to the dissenters. And from this time (at least) the Test Act does as directly affect the dissenters as the papists; and it is not worth while to dispute with them, whether they were put under this act by King Charles or King William. But I recommend it to some persons to consider the proceedings of that parliament of King William; they were no friends to persecution; they released dissenters from all penalties, yet thought it fit to extend the Test Act to them; and let such persons

learn from hence (if they please) that persecution is one thing, and excluding the ill-affected to our establishment from places of power, is another: or if they can by no means part with their charge of persecution, I hope they will not for the future, single me out to bear it all, but will allow King William and his parliament their due share.

But that it may not be suggested, that King William consented to as much as he could obtain from his parliament, and left the Test in force, because the times would not admit a repeal; it is proper to inform the reader, that he had declared his opinion in this matter, before the revolution. When King James attempted to repeal as well the Test as the penal laws, he endeavoured to gain the approbation of the Prince and Princess of Orange; and Mr. Stewart, by the king's order, wrote to Mr. Fagel upon that head; Mr. Fagel in his answer delivers their highnesses sense; that they could wish penal laws removed; but as to the Test, they had a just aversion to the abrogation of it.

The last paragraph of Mr. Fagel's answer to Mr. Stewart's letter, printed anno 1687, as taken from the late History of England, is to this effect.

"Lastly, (he concluded) that their highnesses "ever had, and were resolved ever to preserve a "profound submission to his majesty, as they thought "themselves in duty bound by the laws of God "and nature: but since the matter that was then in "hand related not to the making of new laws, but "to the total abrogation of those already made "both by king and parliament; their highnesses did

" not see how it could be expected of them, that " they should consent to such an abrogation, to " which they had so just an aversion; as being a " thing that was contrary to all the laws and cus- " toms of all Christian states, whether protestants " or papists, who admit none to a share in the go- " vernment or public employments, but those who " professed the public and established Religion, and " endeavoured to secure it against all attempts what- " soever."

This letter is, I think, a full answer to such as pretend to say that dissenters from the national Church enjoy greater privileges in Holland than they do with us. The Prince and Princess of Orange, and Mr. Fagel, knew surely what was the constitution in that country; and the reader has their sentiments, that " it was contrary to the laws and cus- " toms of all Christian states, whether protestants " or papists, to admit dissenters to a share in the " government, or public employments." And so true is this, that no Arminian in Holland is ever admitted into the magistracy: and the case is the same in Sweden, Denmark, the principalities and free towns of the empire, which profess the Protestant Religion. At Dantzick, as I am informed, three out of eighteen magistrates are allowed to be Calvinists, the rest being Lutherans; a proportion so small, that it will hardly make an exception to the general rule:

I have now laid before the reader the reasons inducing me to wish the continuance of those laws, which, as many have declared, ought to be repealed.

Whether they judged right who suggested, that I could not be a well-wisher to these laws, without being an approver of persecution, the world must judge from what I have now offered.

I will beg leave, however, to remind them of something which they ought to have considered before they had openly declared and called for a repeal of the Test Act. In the fifth of the queen, an act was made, introductive to the union of the two kingdoms, entitled, "An Act for securing the Church of "England as by Law established." In which act it is provided, that an act of 13 Eliz. entitled, "An "Act for Ministers of the Church to be of sound "Religion; and the Act of Uniformity, 13 Charles "II.—And all other and singular Acts of Parliament, now in force for the Establishment and "Preservation of the Church of England, and the "Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government "thereof, shall remain and be in full force for "ever." This act is inserted verbatim in the Act of Union, and declared to be an essential condition of the said union,—an essential and fundamental part of the—articles and union. Since then all and singular acts, in force at the time of the union, for the establishment and preservation of the Church are made perpetual, it should have been considered, whether the Test Act did not come within this description; and the rather, because by an act of parliament 10 Annæ, cap. 2. it is declared concerning the Corporation and Test Acts, that both—were made for the security of the Church of England as by law established. Now if these acts were, as it

is declared by the legislature, made for the security of the Church established: and if all such acts are fundamentals of the union, and to continue in force for ever, no private writer, I presume, ought to have called for a repeal. If this be permitted, what jealousies may not be fomented? What handle does this administer to ill-disposed men, to break in upon the like security which the kirk enjoys, whenever they have power and opportunity?

I speak this of private writers only: when the legislature set limits to their own authority, they must continue the judges of those limits; and it would be great presumption in me to pretend to say, that this consideration does effect, or how it does affect the supreme power; but there is at least so much appearance in it, as to make it very improper for private men to give judgment in the case.

I shall transcribe the words of the Union Act relating to the security of the Church of England, and so conclude this head.

Quinto Annæ, cap. 8. sect. 7. "And whereas it "is reasonable and necessary, that the true protes- "tant religion professed and established by law in "the Church of England, and the doctrine, wor- "ship, discipline and government thereof, should be "effectually and unalterably secured; be it enacted "by the queen's most excellent majesty, by and with "the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and "temporal, and the commons in this present parlia- "ment assembled, and by authority of the same, "that an act made in the thirteenth year of the reign "of queen Elizabeth, of famous memory, entitled,

" 'An Act for Ministers of the Church to be of
" sound Religion:' and also another act made in
" the thirteenth year of the reign of the late king
" Charles II. entitled, 'An Act for the Uniformity
" of the public Prayers and Administration of Sacra-
" ments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, and for
" establishing the form of making, ordaining, and
" consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in the
" Church of England,' (other than such clauses in
" the said acts, or either of them, as have been re-
" pealed or altered by any subsequent act or acts of
" parliament) and all and singular other acts of par-
" liament now in force for the establishment and
" preservation of the Church of England, and the
" doctrine, worship, discipline, and government
" thereof, shall remain and be in full force for
" ever.

Sect. 8. " And be it further enacted by the au-
" thority aforesaid, that after the demise of her
" majesty (whom God long preserve) that the sove-
" reign next succeeding to her majesty in the royal
" government of the kingdom of Great Britain, and
" so for ever hereafter, every king or queen succeed-
" ing or coming to the royal government of the king-
" dom of Great Britain, at his or her coronation,
" shall in the presence of all persons who shall be
" attending, assisting, or otherwise then and there
" present, take and subscribe an oath to maintain
" and preserve inviolably the said settlement of the
" Church of England, and the doctrine, worship,
" discipline, and government thereof, as by law esta-
" blished within the kingdoms of England and Ire-

"land, the dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick "upon Tweed, and the territorities thereunto be- "longing."

Sect. 11. "And it is hereby further enacted by "the authority aforesaid, that the said act passed in "this present Session of Parliament, entitled, 'An "Act for securing the Church of England as by law "established,' and all and every the matters and "things therein contained: and also the said Act of "Parliament of Scotland, entitled, 'An Act for se- "curing the Protestant Religion, and Presbyterian "Church Government,' with the establishment in "the said act contained, be, and shall for ever be "held and adjudged to be, and observed as funda- "mental and essential conditions of the said union: "and shall in all times coming be taken to be, and "are hereby declared to be essential and fundamen- "tal parts of the said articles and union."

The second question is this.

Supposing it to be right to put offices of power and trust into the hands of such only as are well affected to the ecclesiastical establishment; whether it be lawful to require of any man, who is willing to accept such office, that he should communicate with the Church established; and particularly that he should receive the Sacrament according to the rites and usage of it, in order to prove his communion with it.

It is here to be observed, that the Test-Act obliges no man to receive the Sacrament. It may (and I doubt it too often does) prove a temptation to a man to do, what otherwise he would not choose to do;

but for such insincerity the receiver and not the law-maker is to answer. We ought not indeed to lay stumbling blocks in the way of our brethren; but the Legislature consider the receiving the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England not only as lawful, but as commendable in a Christian, and therefore they can in no sense be charged with tempting men to sin. But the objection has been stated in a form more general; it has been argued, that "religion ought not to be a civil test:" in answer to which, I alledge, that religion is the test, whenever an oath is required. I shall endeavour to set that matter in a clear light.

1. Religion considered in its first principle and foundation, is that sense and persuasion which men have of the being and power of God, and of the relation they stand in to him as creatures and subjects.

This sense is the very bond and obligation which tie men to God; and though in strictness of speech it may perhaps more properly be called the foundation of all religion than religion itself; yet the disposition which naturally arises from hence, and influences all religious acts and duties whatever, has entitled even the original sense by a common figure of speech, to bear the title of religion.

2. The first and most immediate consequences from this sense, are, that we ought to love, fear, and trust in God, as Creator and Governor. These are, properly and strictly speaking, religious acts of a rational mind.

3. The whole complex of man's bounden duty to

God, deducible from this general sense, is properly called religion.

4. Any branch of religion, respecting immediately either God, ourselves, or our neighbour, may by a figure usual with all writers be termed religion: thus it is religion to love God, so also it is religion to love our neighbour.

5. All particular duties as they regard God, may for the same reason be called religion.

6. The coming in of the Gospel made no alteration in the essentials of religion. 'Tis just as much religion now to love and fear God, and to obey him, as it was before the publishing the Gospel; and no more so. But it is to be observed, that our blessed Lord has commanded the observation of some positive institutions, intended to be signs and memorials to Christians of the grace bestowed on them by God through Christ. These institutions are ordained for the sake and for the preservation of true Christian Religion; and are called religion, not because they are, in their own nature, religious acts, but for the relation they have to religion, through the institution and command of Christ Jesus, and to that truly religious disposition of mind, with which they ought always to be performed.

From this account I would observe,

1. That to love, fear, and trust God, as Governor of the universe, are the first and most essential duties of religion, and resulting immediately from the natural sense and disposition of a rational mind. That all particular duties flow from these; and consequently, that no particular duty can be called

religion in an higher sense, than these are so called.

2. That these essential duties are the religion on which an oath is founded.

The next thing to be considered, is the meaning of the word test.

The word test is a relative term, and always respects something that is to be testified. And therefore a test, as it is applied to human affairs, denotes a sensible evidence naturally tending to prove the thing doubted of. I say naturally tending, because no human appointment can make any thing to be a sign of an inward disposition, which is not naturally so; an oath is therefore a test of the witness's veracity, because it naturally implies (the religion of man supposed) the strongest obligation and disposition to speak truth.

The word civil added to test, does not denote any thing that belongs to the test itself, or that enters into the nature of it; but signifies merely the end for which it is required, or the use that is made of it. The sacramental test is called a civil test, not because the act of receiving becomes a civil or political act, by being made a test, but only because the end for which it is made a test, relates to the civil state, and the use made of the test is political, respecting the government. So that in the sacramental test there is nothing civil or political, but as it is applied by the government; on the part of the receiver it continues to be a religious act, without any mixture of politics in virtue of the law; when it is brought before the government, they consider the act of receiv-

ing according to the usage of the Established Church, only as implying the qualification which the State requires in all persons, who shall be in office, &c. In this sense then religion is made a civil test, that the magistrate is enabled from thence to draw a consequence which he applies to civil affairs.

To apply this to the two cases before us.

An oath is required of a witness as a test of his veracity. It is the act of a man considered as a religious creature; for take away the sense of religion, and there is no pretence for requiring an oath; since then an oath has all its force from the religion of the man, it is the religion of a man alone that makes it a test; for whatever it is that makes it naturally signify, what is intended or required to be signified by it, that it is, which gives it the essential properties of a test: but it is the religion of the man alone that makes his oath naturally signify the veracity of his evidence, in virtue of the strong obligation it puts him under to speak truth. It is evident then the religion of the man is the test whenever an oath is required. And religion here denotes the first and immediate duties arising from the knowledge of God and of ourselves, as they are explained Art. 2. in the account of religion. For whoever takes an oath, does (as it were) pawn the love and fear of God which are in him, and all his trust and hope in God, for the truth and sincerity of his evidence or promise. And these internal principles are the ground and foundation of all religious acts whatever. No test can be founded on an higher degree of religion than this; no positive duty can imply a greater degree of

religion than is contained in this general faith, in these first principles from which all duties flow.

It has been urged, that we are not bound by religion to take oaths: and in this has been placed the great difference between the test of an oath and the sacramental test; but the observation does not come up to the case. For an oath is that act of a man by which religion is made a test; and though the act itself be not commanded, yet the religion laid hold on by that act is commanded, unless it should be thought, that we are under no command or obligation to love, to fear, to trust in God.

The true parallel stands thus:

We are obliged to believe in God, and to fear him, and to trust in him, in the virtue of the reason given us by God.

We are obliged to receive the Sacrament in the Church of Christ in obedience to an institution of Christ; and consequently we are supposed to be in communion with that visible part of the Church with which we receive the Sacrament.

When the magistrate requires an oath, he lays hold on the natural sense and obligation we are under to believe in, and to fear God, and grounds the test on them.

When he requires the sacramental test, he lays hold of the obligation we are under to communicate with that Church which we esteem to be a true part of the Church of Christ, and grounds the test on it.

And the reader has it now fairly before him to judge how far religion is in both cases a civil test,

and whether it be not at least as much so in the first case as in the latter.

But if it shall be allowed that religion has, by the common consent of nations, been made a test in civil matters; and consequently that the objection from the nature of religion in general is not good: yet it remains to be considered in particular, whether there be any thing in the institution of the Sacrament that makes it unlawful for the government to use it as a test. And here it must be granted, that if the statutes, requiring the sacramental test, have added to, or taken from, the institution of Christ, they are certainly unlawful; but if they have done neither, they have been very unjustly charged with perverting the end of the institution.

To draw a just consequence from seeing a man do an act enjoined by Christ, is, I presume, no affront to the command of Christ: to argue from a man's obeying the Gospel, that he is a Christian, will hardly be taken for an abuse of the Gospel; so in the present case, to conclude from a man's receiving the Sacrament in the Church of England, that he is in communion with the Church of England (which is all the use that the government makes of the Sacrament considered as a test), is surely as innocent a thing as any in the world. If it can be shewn that the laws now in force require any man to receive, otherwise than a member of the Church of England ought to receive, when not called upon by those laws; or with any view, or purpose of heart contrary to the Gospel; let the laws be condemned. I put the whole, that I have to say in justification of them, upon this

issue; only desiring the laws may not be charged with the hypocrisy and guilt of such, as despise the laws of God and man.

The word test, when applied to the Sacrament, is a mere external denomination; it does not denote any thing belonging to the institution, or to the action of receiving, but merely the use that is made of it, as an external sign. If the government take it to signify what it does naturally signify, they are guilty of no impiety: and I am at a loss to find the great wickedness in supposing that whoever receives the Sacrament in the Church of England is a member of that Church. And therefore I am surprised to hear this called, "debasing the most sacred thing in "the world into a political tool and engine of "State."

But perhaps, it may be said, that the fault lies in requiring men to receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England: but before this is said, it should be considered, that it is no great crime to require a man to do, what his professed principles lead him to do. And therefore the legislature are blameless in requiring the members of the Church of England to receive according to the rites of their own Church: and we may know from hence, that they intended to require it of no others, that when they found others did receive it in consequence of these laws, they put a stop to all temptations to such abuse of the law for the future, by the occasional bill. And even as to the members of the Church of England, they are no more obliged by these laws to receive, than they are to take a place;

and if they think fit to take a place, yet so much time is allowed (that is, three months) for receiving the Sacrament, that it must needs be their own fault, if they are not well prepared for it. So that, in all views, the legislature are guiltless of the profanation of the Lord's Supper, with which they have been so warmly and so indecently charged.

But after all (it will be said) that in fact, many who receive upon account of offices, do it in a very indecent manner, and come very ill prepared to this solemn part of religious worship: *pudet hæc opprobria*; I am sorry there is so just cause of complaint in this respect. And in God's name, let the ministers of the Gospel speak to the consciences of their people; let them reprove their iniquity, and shew them that there will be "no profit in gaining the "world, if they lose their own souls;" and if this will not do, let them turn away the open and notorious offenders from the Lord's table; and tell them, they have "neither part nor lot in this matter; for "their hearts are not right in the sight of God."

I know this is thought to be a dangerous experiment; for a notion prevails, that the Test Act "forces clergymen to give the communion to every "atheist, or debauchee, who may be named to any "civil office; unless he chooses to be ruined for not "doing it." The reader may look into the Test Act if he pleases; but if he looks till doomsday, he will find nothing in it to force any clergyman to give the Sacrament to every one, much less to every atheist, who may be named to a place. The Test Act leaves this matter just as it found it, subject to the

rules and canons of the Church; and the man who comes with a place to receive the Sacrament, is in the same case as he who comes without one; and is liable to be refused for the same reasons. The rubrics before the communion service authorize the curate "to repel all open notorious evil livers; all "who have done wrong to their neighbours by word "or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended; and, those betwixt whom he perceiveth "malice and hatred to reign—provided that within "fourteen days he give notice to the ordinary, &c." These rubrics have the authority of an act of parliament; and, in case of any dispute, are as good a rule to the judges in Westminster-hall, as to the curate of the parish; and therefore if the curate does right, according to these rules, in the Church, he can never suffer for so doing in Westminster-hall; and if he does wrong, he ought to suffer, whether the person, injuriously refused, had a place or no.

We have heard in common talk, that a person who loses a place by being refused the Sacrament, may have an action against the curate for damages. But there must be an injury done, as well as a damage suffered, to entitle a man to an action: and therefore let a man suffer what damage he will by being refused, yet if he was not wrongfully refused, the law will give him no remedy: and whatever clergyman acts according to the rubric, which is a rule prescribed him, as well by the law of the land, as of the Church, will be in no great danger of being judged to have acted injuriously.

Cases of this nature are properly triable in the ecclesiastical courts; but supposing, that by reason of the temporal damage sustained by loss of a place, a man may have an action in the temporal courts; yet I presume, that he would not be allowed to proceed upon the bare allegation, that he was refused the Sacrament; but he must aver, that he was refused it unjustly, and without sufficient reason: and if upon the trial it shall appear that the curate did refuse him; but that he did it justly and with sufficient reason; the complainer will be entitled to no remedy: the rubrics, and canons of the Church must be in that case the rule to judge by: and if the minister has followed the rubrics and canons, he will be justified; if he has not, I am not concerned to inquire what will become of him.

I may venture then to assert, that the Test Act forces no clergyman to give the Sacraments to atheists and debauchees, or any other offenders, if they be openly and notoriously such; if they are such only in secret, they are out of the question; for no clergyman's conscience can be burdened by admiting an unknown offender to the Sacrament.

Should any clergyman, forgetting his duty, refuse a parishioner the Sacrament out of passion or prejudice, or with any other sinister view, he must thank himself for what he shall suffer on that account: and he will deserve to suffer, whether his parishioner had a place, or had not one: but if he proceeds with discretion and charity, and according to the rules prescribed him by authority, he has as little to fear from

a man with a place, as from a man without one: and if he be unjustly and vexatiously sued for doing his duty, the law will give him costs.

But it may be said perhaps, that it is enough to ruin a poor clergyman (and many such there are) to justify what he does well, by the method of law. If this be true, the more is the pity. But then I would have it observed, that this difficulty does not arise from the Test Act; and therefore it is not chargeable on it: but it rises from the course of our legal proceedings, and is common to all cases. A clergyman may be ruined, (and many a one has been) by sueing for his just dues of tithes and offerings: and yet methinks it would be an injudicious complaint to quarrel with the laws, by which the dues are claimed, on this account. Whoever can find a just and adequate remedy for this difficulty, he will merit the thanks of the clergy; but it is absurd to charge that as the fault of one law which is common to all.

I know but of one difficulty more that can be made in this matter, which is this: it may be alledged, that a curate may have sufficient reason to himself to repel a man from the communion, and yet it may be hard for him to make legal evidence against the man, of the crime for which he refuses him. In answer to which, I say, that a curate of a parish is bound to proceed by the rules prescribed him by the Church; and he cannot be answerable for not doing what the Church has given him no authority to do. It is not every private sin a man commits, that ought to ex-

clude him from the Sacrament, though it should accidentally come to the curate's knowledge. It is a proper ground for private admonition; but till it becomes an offence to the congregation, it does not necessarily call for open censure. Of the three cases mentioned in the Rubrick, two of them require a notoriety of fact; and the third is so limited, that it must become notorious, before a man can be excluded for it; for though the curate may repel those betwixt whom he perceiveth malice to reign, yet if the parties declare themselves to be in mutual charity, they shall be admitted; or if one declares himself content to forgive, &c. he shall be admitted. And if any man upon admonition shall refuse these conditions, I think his want of charity will be notorious. Since then no curate is obliged in duty to repel a man from the Sacrament but for offences open and notorious, he will always have it in his power either to admit a man consistently with his own obligations, or to make clear proof of the reasons for which he repels him.

But after all, the great cause of these disorders, is the neglect of the constitutions and rules of the Church: if no curate would admit any to the Sacrament but his own parishioners*; and would require of them to give him due notice of their intentions to receive†; many of the abuses and irreverencies now justly complained of, would be prevented; notorious offenders would not offer themselves where they are

* Canon 48. † Rubrick before communion.

well known; nor would any man dare to approach the Lord's table indecently, when he knew himself to be under the observation of curate and congregation; whereas strangers, who slip into congregations, where no body knows them, if they have no religion, it is no wonder that sometimes they have no decency. I know very well that the neglect of these good orders has been suffered so long, that private curates can hardly hope to succeed in attempting to restore them; but it is proper matter of consideration for our superiors, and to them I submit it.

There is yet one more objection against the Test Act, namely, "That it is a worldly motive to induce "Christians to the same one certain profession in "religious matters, and to the same one certain form "of words and ceremonies in public worship." I would to God it had produced this effect! I should rejoice to see the Test Act grow useless and out of date, by the general conformity of the people of this nation. But the truth is, the act was made for no such purpose; the intent was to keep dissenters out of the State, not to force them into the Church; which may appear in part from hence, that their meetings were tolerated by the very act, in the first of William and Mary, which expressly extends the test to them.

But whatever the intent was, we may be told, the effect is, that men are tempted by this act to outward conformity, and are made hypocrites. I allow it to be so; and what then? Why, hypocrisy is a very evil thing, and no man ought to have a temptation

to it laid in his way: true still; and to prevent this, was one reason of the occasional bill. But though all such hypocrisy cannot be prevented; yet, consider, are they who encourage virtue and true religion answerable for the hypocrisy of those, who will pretend to virtue and religion, in order to share in the encouragement? If they are, then it is in itself a wicked thing to encourage virtue and true religion; and a father is a wicked man who rewards one son for doing well, because thereby he may possibly tempt another to make a shew of doing well. A gentleman in the country, who shows some mark of favour to his poor neighbours who religiously attend the public service of God, is really by so doing drawing upon himself the wrath of God, by laying a temptation before others to make an appearance of being better than really they are. If these consequences are good, then I am sure that "the worship of God and "the neglect of it, religion and irreligion ought to "be set on an equal foot in this world." But if they are false; the objection against the test has no weight in it; and it will be lawful to do right, notwithstanding that some perhaps may make a wrong use of our so doing. But this general reason is calculated to serve more purposes than one; and there will be occasion, some time or other, to recall it to examination. In the mean while, I shall take leave of this part of the argument; not intending (without very good reason) to be drawn into it again: for although I have, for the sake of religion, and of this Christian Church, both which (as I still conceive)

must suffer by the principles now propagated, been content to enter into a controversy; yet I do not design that it shall grow to be the employment of my life.

If there be reason in what I have offered, it will prevail with reasonable men; if there be not, I am not so unreasonable as to desire it should.

BISHOP HORSLEY'S

REVIEW OF THE CASE

OF THE

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS;

WITH REFERENCE TO THE

CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS,

IN WHICH THE REASONS ALLEGED BY THE NON-CONFORMISTS FOR THE REPEAL OF THOSE LAWS, ARE EXAMINED UNDER THE THREE GENERAL HEADS, TO WHICH THEY ARE REDUCIBLE, OF

GROUNDS OF CLAIM, RELIGIOUS MOTIVES,

AND

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS,

AND SHEWN TO FAIL IN EACH BRANCH.

PREFACE.

AMIDST the perpetual struggles of the Church of England with her numerous enemies, those various sects, which, with little good liking to each other, have been always however firmly confederated for her destruction; the defence of the Corporation Act and the Test Act hath from time to time found employment for the pens of her ablest advocates; among whom she may justly reckon SHERLOCK, GIBSON, ELLIS, SWIFT, WARBURTON. Of these, the first and the last may be considered as the elementary writers upon the subject. Bishop Warburton in his Alliance between Church and State, hath shewn the general good policy of an establishment, and the necessity of A TEST for its security, upon principles which republicans themselves cannot easily deny. Bishop Sherlock in his Vindication of the Corporation and Test Act, at this time very seasonably republished, hath shewn the particular necessity of a Test to this country, and the particular propriety of the Sacramental Test. Bishop Warburton's work is one of the finest specimens, that are to be found perhaps in any language, of scientific reasoning applied to a political subject; and Bishop Sherlock's pamphlet, for force and perspicuity of argument, and for precision and elegance of stile, may rank among the first of controversial writings. The fol-

lowing Tract is of another kind. It pretends to no merit, but that of applying immediately to the present occasion. It is simply, what the title announces, "A Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters." The general argument is but slightly touched; so far only, as seemed necessary for the confutation of their plea, and the correction of their mistakes. Their political merits are canvassed with the greatest freedom. To set them forth in their real colours, neither heightened nor extenuated, it hath been found necessary to refer to particular passages in the latest writings of their most distinguished teachers; and to draw inferences concerning the spirit of the party, which its friends may perhaps dislike, but at which they cannot justly take offence. If it is maintained, that dissenters are, as such, disqualified for certain situations; it is not that they are esteemed dangerous, as bad men, but, as very good men, for such many of them unquestionably are, led away by unhappy prejudices. If they are taxed with principles, which in certain situations and in certain times, would render them not the best subjects of the British government; it is not, that they would be worse than honest men must be, with those principles. But after all, offence will be taken, nor will it easily be removed. For unfortunately such principles are proved upon the party, and the tendency of the principles is self-evident: it would need no proof, even if none were extant in the British annals. It will still be the author's consolation, under whatever resentment he may have drawn upon himself, that he hath acted in pure obedience to that maxim of antient wisdom which his title page

holds forth, meaning to serve the interests of religion, and to satisfy one of the first duties of a citizen. He thinks it only necessary to declare, that under the general name of dissenters, he includes not the members of the Church of Scotland, or of any foreign establishment, who, residing here, may choose to adhere to their own forms. For our indigenous dissenters, to whom alone the appellation properly belongs, he heartily prays; that the issue of the present contention may be, to open their eyes to the discernment of this truth: That toleration on the part of government, and a chearful submission, on the part of the tolerated, to some necessary restraints, are the only terms, upon which churchmen and dissenters can ever walk together as friends.

A REVIEW, &c.

THE two acts of parliament, which are commonly known by the names of the Corporation Act, and the Test Act, were both passed at no great distance of time after the restoration: the former in the year 1661, the latter in the year 1672. The former is entitled, *An Act for the well-governing and regulating of Corporations;* the latter, *An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants.* Both agree in one principal object; the securing of the civil constitution against the factious attempts of discontented parties: and both agree in one subordinate object, as the means of the principal, the security of the reformed episcopal Church of England, at that time emerging from the ruin, in which it had been involved during Oliver's detestable usurpation; and recovering, under the restored monarchy, its antient rights. What it had so lately suffered from the too successful cabals of its inveterate enemies, the same sects which now beheld the renovation of its splendor with an evil and malignant eye, evinced the necessity of some legal provision for its safety: and how closely the safety of the king and

the constitution, and the peace of the kingdom, were connected with the preservation of the Church, the late troubles had also shewn. The Corporation Act, besides that it required certain oaths and declarations, of persons at that time bearing certain offices in corporations, hath provided, that *no person or persons shall FOR EVER HEREAFTER, be placed, elected or chosen, in or to any the offices or places aforesaid, that shall not have, within one year next before such election or choice, taken the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the rites of the Church of England.* And the Test Act hath provided, that every person appointed to any office of command, authority, trust or profit, civil or military under his Majesty, or by authority derived from him, shall before the taking of certain oaths, by that act required to be taken, *receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the Church of England, within three months after admittance* into such office, *in some public Church, upon some Lord's day, immediately after divine service and sermon.*

Of these restraints, some of our modern non-conformists feel themselves impatient; and it is expected that their friends in parliament will stir, during the present session, for the total repeal of both the offensive laws. A paper hath been lately circulated, under the title of "The Case of the Protestant Dissenters, with reference to the Corporation and Test Acts," assigning reasons, which seem to the party of sufficient weight, to determine the legislature to adopt their measure. To examine these reasons is the pur-

port of the ensuing pages. They shall be separately canvased, not in the order in which they are propounded in the Case, (if indeed the name of order may be given to confusion) but under the three heads to which they are reducible of grounds of claim, on the part of the non-conformists; religious considerations, and political reasons. By attending to these distinctions, (which however, in the framing of the Case, seem rather purposely confounded than observed) the separate weight of each argument will be best appreciated, and the general merits of the question most clearly understood.

Our proposed examination therefore shall proceed in this order: The grounds of claim, on the part of the non-conformists, shall be first examined; as what ought, in all such cases, to be the weakest part of the whole plea. The religious grounds of their petition shall be next examined; and their political reasons, in which the strength of the cause ought to lie, shall be canvased last. There may be grounds of claim, there may be religious motives, and political arguments upon the other side. But the main thing in question is the justice and propriety of one of those great measures of the State respecting the Church, in which, so long as religious ordinances are not profaned, nor the conscience of the individual persecuted, political expedience must over-rule all other considerations. For self-preservation is the leading principle which must govern the whole morality of a State; in so much, that no claim on the part of a citizen, or of any description of citizens,

temporal or ecclesiastical, can be just and equitable (the government itself being supposed a just one, both in its principles and execution) which may be contrary to the State's security. To the grounds therefore of claim, on the side of the non-conformists, political considerations on the contrary side, may perhaps be opposed. But no claims on the part of the established Church, shall be set in opposition to any just plea of political expedience, if any such should be found, on the side of the non-conformists: since by the principles laid down, political expedience, once clearly demonstrated, must overset all claims on either side.

The pretended claim of the non-conformists appears to be three-fold: upon the gratitude, upon the justice, upon the impartiality of the State.

Their claim upon the gratitude of the State is founded upon certain great good services which the non-conformists, in the reign of Charles the Second, rendered both to Church and State, and the disinterested part they acted, in "contributing to the pass-"ing of the Test Act." The Test Act they say was introduced as a barrier against popery, "in direct "opposition to the court," which at the time was supposed to favour papists. The non-conformists readily concurred in a measure, which, however opposite to their own interests, was deemed necessary for the security of the protestant cause in general. And they think it hard, that an act, obtained in some measure by their concurrence, should be turned against them. And the very same language, it must be con-

fessed, was held upon this subject, so long since as the beginning of the present century, by a bishop in the house of lords.

Now although it should be admitted, that the fact was, as it is represented by the protestant dissenters; still it may be reasonable to ask them, whether they conceive that the general danger from popery, which their ancestors so much dreaded, is now in such degree removed, that papists may with safety be admitted to those places of authority and trust, from which the Corporation and the Test Acts exclude them. Because if the danger still continue, it may become the non-conformists of the present times to imitate the example of their ancestors, which they so much extol; and to submit chearfully to particular inconveniences for the general good.

But to this they have a ready answer. The oaths of allegiance and supremacy, they say, with the declaration against transubstantiation, would be sufficient for the security of Protestantism against popery, without the sacramental Test. Our ancestors indeed thought otherwise. They thought oaths and declarations insufficient without the barrier of the Test. Perhaps it might ill become private citizens, without some better authority than merely that of their own judgments, to agitate a question, which the legislature of the country hath once solemnly decided. But to experience, in this age of experiment, an appeal will lie even against the decisions of public legislative wisdom. "The oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation *have been found effectual* for more than a cen-

tury, to exclude papists from both houses of parliament*." Why then should not the same oaths, with the declaration, be effectual, without the sacramental Test, to exclude papists from all those offices, from which the Corporation and Test Acts were intended to exclude them?

But this reasoning is fallacious, proceeding to its conclusion through the medium of a false fact, assumed upon the evidence of an imaginary or misinterpreted experience. The exclusion of papists, for more than a century, from both houses of parliament, if it hath not been effected by the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation, can be no argument of the probable efficacy of the same oaths and the same declaration for other exclusions. Now the truth is, that the exclusion of papists for the last century, from parliament, hath not been the effect of any oaths or declarations. For if it be supposed that papists, during all this time have been governed by their old principles, no oaths or declarations, made to a government, which their Church hath deemed heretical, can have bound their conscience. The notoriety of their popery, and the dread and abhorrence of the principles of the Church of Rome, which the people of this country in general entertain, have been the real, oaths and declarations have been only the apparent means of their exclusion from the house of commons. No one can without some notoriety of character, become a candidate for a seat in parliament. His situation in life must

* See the Case. 8. 5.

be conspicuous and respectable: his family and his connections must be known. It is difficult for any one, in this rank of life, to make a secret of his religion; and to a papist, the difficulty is heightened by the very nature of his religion; which delighting, as it does, in externals, tends to the discovery. And so great, even in these times of indifference, is the dread of popery, that were a reputed papist to become a candidate to represent the most corrupt borough in the kingdom, it would be impossible that he should carry his election. In the upper house, papists have been excluded from the seats, to which birth might entitle them, not by oaths and declarations, but by the sentiments inseparable from hereditary nobility. A person in this high rank appears as a patron and protector of any party to which he may belong. And whatever general opprobrium may follow the party, something of respect and honour waits upon the character of a powerful chief. The distinction gained in his own party, is a compensation to every peer of the Roman communion, for the consequence which he loses in the State, by an adherence to the religion of his ancestors. He therefore chearfully excludes himself from his hereditary place in the legislative council; especially when his admission to it cannot be attained, without mean dissimulations, which would wound his feelings as a man of honour, whatever subterfuges the casuastry of his Church may have provided for his conscience. The end of the Corporation and the Test Acts, is to exclude persons of a far inferior condition, from far inferior situations; and persons of all conditions, from situa-

tions to which neither birth, nor the choice of the people, but the favour of the court gives admission. It was the purpose of these acts to exclude persons, upon whom the generosity of inbred sentiment might lay no powerful restraint, persons whose attachments and persuasions might be more easily concealed, from offices in corporations; in which the share, which those who are placed in them acquire, in the management of elections, in the patronage of livings, in the superintendance of religious, literary, and charitable foundations, would, in the hands of those who should not be friends to the establishment in Church and State, to which it was supposed no one of the Roman Church at that time could be a friend, be a means of slowly and secretly undermining the constitution; and to exclude unfit persons of all ranks from places conferred by the favour of the crown; that the crown might not be at liberty, if at any time ill-advised it should have the inclination, to exert its influence, for the re-establishment of the papal tyranny. These were the views with which the Corporation and the Test Act were introduced. And unless it can be allowed, that the danger from popery is in such degree diminished; that papists may, with safety to the civil and religious constitution, be allowed to have a principal share in the elections of members of parliament, in the patronage of Church-livings, in the appointment of professors, of masters of colleges and schools, and governors of hospitals; (of colleges, schools, and hospitals endowed too with the wealth of pious church-men) unless it be allowed that papists are fit persons to bear commissions in

the army and the navy, to bear offices of command and trust under his majesty, or by authority derived from him, from many of which places they cannot be excluded by the same means, which have effected their exclusion from either house of parliament; nor by any oaths or declarations, with which their Church takes upon her to dispense; unless the safety of admitting papists to all these places be allowed, the necessity of the sacramental Test, for the security of the reformed Religion in this country, must be the same now, as when the Test was first exacted; and the political inexpediency of the proposed repeal must over-rule the plea, which the nonconformists of the present day would build upon the good services of their ancestors.

Indeed, without extending our views to the interests of the protestant cause in general, any otherwise than as those general interests must, in the nature of the thing, in every country depend upon the stability of some particular establishment; the political argument against the proposed repeal, as it respects only the particular security of the Church by law established, will greatly countervail any plea of hereditary merit on the side of the nonconformists. Not but that churchmen will readily allow, what the nonconformists, if they would be consistent with their own conduct upon a late occasion, must be careful how they deny; that the danger from popery either to the protestant cause in general, or to the constitution of this country in particular, is from various causes much diminished. The spirit

of the Roman Church, it is hoped, is become more moderate and gentle. For although the reformation of Religion hath been a principal cause of the progress of learning and the advancement of science, within the two last centuries; yet the benefit hath not been confined to the reformed countries. The light of knowledge, like the light natural, spreads itself by an inherent power of expansion. Nor is it possible that the one, more than the other, should be confined to the spot, where the blaze is first kindled. It is not therefore in the Protestant Churches only, that the intellect of man had been for two centuries or more in an improving state. Liberty of conscience hath his advocates even among the Roman clergy. The conclave indeed hath not yet renounced its detestable maxims, that faith is not to be kept with heretics, and that princes deprived by the pope may be deposed and murthered by their subjects. On the contrary, no longer than since the year 1768, when it was proposed to exempt the Roman Catholics in Ireland from the penal laws, upon condition that they should swear allegiance to the king, and declare their abhorrence of those infernal doctrines; the court of Rome exerted all its influence with the Irish catholics to prevent their acceptance of these conditions. The titulary bishops in Ireland at their consecration, swear to defend the Roman papacy, and the royalties of St. Peter; to defend, enlarge, and promote the authority of the Roman Church, and their lord the pope. To persecute and impugn all heretics, schismatics, and rebels against their

said lord *. The pope's court will naturally be the last place where his supremacy will be disowned; and where learning has made the least progress, superstition will be the least shaken. But in this country the Roman Catholic is but weakly attached to legendary doctrines and insignificant ceremonies, which his improved reason hath taught him to despise. He swears allegiance to the king, abjures any authority of the pope to release him from that obligation, and is indeed rather a member of the Gallican Church, than a papist in the proper sense of the word, as it signifies a defender of the pope's secular as well as spiritual sovereignty. The numbers of the sect in Great Britain are generally supposed to be decreasing; and its hopes are broken, by the depressed fortunes and approaching extinction of the family, to which it was attached. He therefore must be a bigot in protestantism, if such a contradiction may exist, as bigotry and the principles of a protestant united, who imagines, that the danger, which at present threatens Church or State from popery, is any thing more (the truth is it is less) than may reasonably be apprehended, from some other sects dissenting from the established Church. Still, however, the Roman Catholics in this country are dissenters: and while they are such, it would be impolitic to remove the restraints, which exclude them from offices in which they might find occasion of doing much secret mischief. For that a dissen-

* See the Bishop of Cloyne's instructive pamphlet on the present State of the Church of Ireland.

ter, whatever may be his integrity or his piety, whatever may be the grounds of his dissent, is an unfit person to be entrusted with command, authority, and influence in any state, in which the civil magistrate takes a particular Church under his protection, is an axiom in politics, of which it is hoped a regular proof is not at this time wanting. Ill will to the establishment must, in all governments, belong to the character of a dissenter, if he be an honest man. Ill will may indeed be divested of its rancour, by the natural good temper of the man, and by the gentle spirit of our common Christianity. And the energies even of rancorous ill will, may be restrained by political sagacity. A dissenter may occasionally contribute to the support of an establishment which he hates; if he foresees that its ruin would be the means of setting up another, from which his party would meet with less indulgence. But a preference cannot but be given by every man, to the sect to which he himself belongs: and from no worse principle than this, which indeed in itself is a virtuous principle, every dissenter from an established Church will be inclined to use any influence or authority, with which an impolitic government may entrust him, to advance his own sect in the popular esteem, and to increase its numbers: and as means to this end, he will use all means that seem to himself fair and justifiable, to undermine the Church established, if there is any hope that its fall may facilitate the establishment of his own, or of some other more congenial to his own. And in all this the crime is not in the man, but in the government, which trusts

him with a power, which he cannot but misuse. The man himself all the while believes that he is doing God, and his country service: and the harm that he may do, under the notion of doing good, will be only so much the more, the greater we suppose his virtues and abilities. Upon these undeniable principles the policy of a Test is founded. The removal therefore of the particular dangers, which once threatened the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of this country from popery, was a just and sufficient reason for the repeal of the penal statutes against the Roman Catholics, but would by no means justify the removal of those restraints, to which the peace and safety of the State require that dissenters of all denominations should be subject.

It were to be wished, that the supposition might reasonably be made, that upon the present occasion there would be no necessity of going so far back in first principles, as to enter into the question of the general good policy of an ecclesiastical establishment. But it requires but a slight acquaintance with the spirit of modern nonconformity to foresee, that an answer will be given to the argument, founded on the dangers to be apprehended from a dissenter, as such, in places of authority and influence, which will necessarily lead to that fundamental question. It will be said that these are dangers that can have no existence, but under an establishment. That an establishment is itself the cause of them. That the proper, and the only radical cure, would therefore be to *unestablish*. That civil government should leave Religion in its natural state

of independence; leave all sects equally unrestrained, and equally unprotected. The natural consequence of which, it will be said, would be, that all sects would be equally friends to this just government, and that no disturbances would be created by their jealousy and envy of each other. Among equals, jealousy and envy could not subsist, and in a Church divested of all its emoluments and honours, ambition and avarice, the sources of jealousy and envy, would have no objects. By the same reasoning it might be proved, that the best method to compose the feuds of jarring factions in the State, would be to abolish civil government. For in the very same sense in which an establishment is itself the cause of the dangers from dissenters, civil government is itself the cause of all the mischiefs, which arise from factions, conspiracies, and treasons. But the truth is, that as factions are not evils introduced by governments, but the remains of evils which government hath not yet been able to expel; symptoms of *original sin* in a particular instance; so religious feuds are other remains of the same evils, which the conjoined powers of government and religion have not yet been able to expel; symptoms of *original sin* in another instance. The first are disorders, for which the present state of mankind admits no perfect cure, but government is the best palliative; and the latter are disorders, for which the present state of mankind admits no cure, but establishments are the best palliatives. The disorder, in both cases, would be more intolerable and more dangerous, if the palliatives were disused. The question, how-

ever, is of little moment, what might be the best policy of a law-giver, with respect to religious sects, in the first formation of a common wealth; if the world were returned to that tumultuary state, out of which, as democratical politicians dream, civil society first arose, and from that chaos of mankind new communities were to be created. Probably every law-giver would find it his interest to seek the alliance of some Church: and every Church would find its advantage in the protection of the law-giver. And to rise above the lower concerns of law-givers and Churches, religion and government would find their several advantages in this mutual alliance. But the fact is, that civil societies are already formed. The question therefore, what might be best to be done, if they were now forming, is beside the purpose. The wise statesman makes the best of the constitution of his country, as he finds it. He never ventures upon the dangerous experiment of unmaking it, to make it up better in another form. In this country the statesman finds an established Church, amidst a variety of brawling sects, all enjoying the utmost liberty of conscience, yet all clamorous against the persecuting spirit of the hierarchy, to whose candour and liberality they are in great part indebted for the blessing of a general toleration. In this state of things the abstract question, "Had it not been better that an establishment "had never been," is of no importance to the statesman, whose sole concern is the practical good. An establishment is; and leaves him only to decide upon

this alternative, "Is it for the peace and safety of "government, that the Church, long since estab- "lished, be maintained in the rights which she hath "long enjoyed, or that she be given up to the ma- "lice of her enemies?" It is believed, that they, with whom the choice at this time rests, are little likely to exclude justice from a principal share in their deliberations. Their choice, however, must in some measure be guided by a comparison of the numbers and the strength of the friends and the foes to the establishment. If the latter make a great majority of the whole people, it may be the policy of government to court the friendship of the strongest, and to abandon a weak ally, however faithful. Not that the principle is universally true, that the chief magistrate is to be determined in the choice of his religion, by the voice of the majority of the people. A circumstance perhaps of far more importance is the fitness of one Church, rather than another, by its internal form, to unite with the civil constitution. In the formation of all alliances, regard is to be had, not only to the strength of the intended ally, but to the probability that both sides will stand to their engagements: and this depends not solely upon the power, but upon the separate interests and dispositions of the contracting parties. In the present question, however, power, strength, and numbers, are undoubtedly to be considered. But if not only the superiority of strength and numbers, but the advantage of assimilation to the civil constitution, be greatly on the side of the estab-

lished Church; it follows that the establishment must be supported: unless it could be deemed a wise measure, that the majority of all ranks of the people, the power of the chief of the hereditary nobility, the interest of the independent country gentlemen, the affections of an honest yeomanry, in freedom of spirit and integrity of principle not inferior to their betters in birth and fortune, with the influence of a numerous clergy, heightened as it would be by their unmerited sufferings, and the learning of the two Universities, should all be thrown, in one huge lump, by government's own hand, into the scale of the discontented party. When the advantage gained would, in truth, be nothing more solid than the acclamations of a multitude. For of what higher value would the praises be of discordant sects, incapable of uniting among themselves; and, if they could unite, incapable of bringing any strength to government as a Church, because they hold all alliance of a Church with government to be profane and antichristian. This is the very ground of their implacable animosity to the present establishment; insomuch, that could a formulary of faith be composed, to which they could all assent in every article; a mode of worship instituted, which they should unanimously approve; a form of Church government devised, which they should all desire to adopt; yet from this best of all possible Churches, were it once established, they would still be dissenters. Because obscurities in the articles, and blemishes in the Liturgy, are not the great point upon which the controversy, between the Church and the

dissenters, turns. We object, they say, to a CONSTITUTION *: and every dissenter, who makes this his objection, must dissent from his own Church, were it once to accept of an establishment. Such being the actual state of things, it will be the policy of government to maintain the established Church; and if the establishment is to be maintained, the Test Act, or some equivalent restraint upon nonconformists, is necessary, not only for the Church's safety, but for the security of government against the intrigues of parties. The claims therefore, which the nonconformists would make upon the gratitude of the State, on the ground of the good services of their ancestors, were they better founded than in truth they are, must nevertheless yield to the strength of argument, on the contrary side, from political expedience.

But the truth is, these claims are groundless. The merits of the non-conformists in the reign of Charles the Second, whatever they might be, can be of no avail to the protestant dissenters of the present day, who are no more the children of the old non-conformists, than the unbelieving Jews, of the apostolic age, were the children of faithful Abraham. They are the issue of their loins, not the children

* Robinson's Lectures upon Non-conformity.—Preface to the fifth edition, p. xxii.

Q. What do the dissenters object to the general constitution of the Church of England?

A. That it is a civil establishment.—Protestant Dissenters Catechism, p. 30. London printed for J. Buckland, No. 57, Pater-noster-row, 1782.

of their principles. The dissenters from the Church of England, in the time of the Stuarts, were Calvinists in doctrine, in discipline presbyterians. What are our modern non-conformists? In doctrine, Arians, Socinians, Pelagians, Necessarians, Materialists, Antinomians; any thing but Calvinists. What are they in discipline? Any thing but churchmen, or presbyterians; no less enemies to presbytery than to the established Church. "Popery," says the great oracle of modern non-conformity, "is the "consummation of religious tyranny, and presby- "terianism, a weak degree of it. But the latter "[presbyterianism] has in it the essence of the for- "mer [popery] and differs from it [presbyterianism "differs from popery] only as a kept mistress differs "from a street-walking prostitute, or as a musquet "differs from a cannon." These are the words of an eminent non-conformist, in a work, in which he professes to state the general principles of non-conformity; and that these words express the sentiments, not of an individual, but of the party, appears by the solemn approbation of the work by a synod of non-conformists, which meets at Harlow, in Essex, and stiles itself the Eastern Association. This approbation "signed by order of all, by Morgan Jones, "Moderator," is printed upon the back of the title-page. The work is entitled "A Plan of Lectures "on the Principles of Non-conformity, for the In- "struction of Catechumens, by R. Robinson." It made its first appearance about the year 1778. In the year 1781, it had run through four editions, and a fifth was sent abroad. This rapid sale, is no less

than the solemn judgment of the Eastern Association, a proof of the approbation, with which it has been received by the general body of the non-conformists. What kindred then can these claim with the protestant dissenters of the last century? In the reign of Charles the Second, was the protestant cause served by the presbyterians, by a willing sacrifice of themselves? Was the established Church strengthened and supported by them as a bulwark against popery, to the detriment of their own party? Lives the remembrance of this service in the mind of government? Glows the public bosom with the generous flame of gratitude? Let the genuine representatives of its benefactors be sought out, the remnant of the true presbyterian sect. On them, if they can be found, let honours and rewards be lavished with an unsparing hand. But to remunerate the services of the old presbyterians on their apostate sons, the non-conformists of the present day, would be nothing better than the absurdity of the Egyptian government reversed; where the reigning monarch, it is said, hath lately thought proper to display his justice, by retaliating on the miserable Jews within his kingdom, the pillage which their ancestors, he said, committed upon his, in the days of Moses.

So much for the claim of our non-conformists upon the gratitude of the State. Their second claim upon its justice, hath a double foundation. The first ground is the right of private judgment in matters of religion. This, they say, "being now universally "acknowledged, no man's exercise of it ought to "be branded with a mark of infamy." The notion

of persecuting men for their opinions, is now indeed justly and happily exploded. A toleration of all the different sects of Christians, each in its own modes of worship, no less than in its doctrines, is also admitted, and become a maxim of government. But that the right of private judgment, in the extent in which it is claimed and exercised by some of the modern nonconformists, is universally acknowledged, is a position to be denied. It is not acknowledged in any such extent by the Church of England, nor by the Calvinistic Churches of Scotland, Holland, or Geneva. It is not acknowledged by the episcopal Church of America. Nor can it be acknowledged without restriction, more or less, by any established Church in Christendom; a denial of any such unlimited right being implied in the very idea of an establishment. This however is of no great importance in the present question: only it becomes the friends of peace and order, either in Church or State, whenever this universal acknowledgment of the right of private judgment is pretended, to protest aloud against it.

But whatever may be the true extent of the right of private judgment, the Corporation Act and the Test Act imprint no infamy upon the exercise of the right, to whatever excess it may sometimes be carried. The exercise of the right, within its just limits, is a thing in its nature so respectable, that any attempt to make it infamous, would indeed only redound to the infamy of government. If the thing is ever infamous, it is when the excess to which it is carried, by persons who in any other part of

their conduct exhibit no symptoms of insanity, creates a suspicion, that, in those instances, the right is only pretended, to cover base designs, and to skreen seditious practices. In these cases, the infamy arises, not from any acts of parliament, but from the appearance of hypocrisy in a man's own conduct. Civil incapacities carry no infamy, except when they are attached to an individual, by the sentence of a court taking cognizance of crimes, for which infamy is the proper, or the legal, punishment. Thus an incapacity to serve his majesty in the army, is attended with infamy to a soldier, when it proceeds from the sentence of a court martial, as a punishment for cowardice. Incapacity to hold preferment in the Church, is infamous to a cleric, when it is the punishment of simony, or of any other scandal. But these same incapacities, of serving in the army or the Church, when they appear not otherwise in the individual, than as he comes within a certain description of citizens, disqualified by some general law, are not infamous; for the same reason, that it is not infamous to any man not to be qualified by his fortune to sit in parliament, or to vote at a county election, or to shoot game. These are civil incapacities; but, they carry no infamy, because no natural turpitude belongs to the want of that measure or sort of property, which makes the legal qualification; nor is it within the intention of the laws, which appropriate these rights, to imprint disgrace upon the excluded citizens. For the same reason, no infamy attends the incapacities established by the Corporation and the Test Acts. The truth

is, that in all these cases of disqualifying laws, not penal, the incapacity is originally in the person. It may be either in the make and constitution of his body; in his mental talents; or, which is a far more frequent case, in the circumstances of his particular relation to society. But in whatever it may consist, the law only declares it. The persons, in whom it may be found, are neither disgraced nor honoured by the declarations of the law, but by the internal quality of the circumstance which the law points out; according as that circumstance is, in its own nature, and in the common judgment of mankind, base or honourable. Were the case otherwise, no man in society would not be infamous; since every man is either naturally or legally disqualified for some one or more of the various situations of civil life. The exclusions however, of the Corporation and the Test Acts hardly amount to incapacities; because they declare no incapacities, but such which the individual hath in his own power, at any time, to efface.

It is much to be lamented, that the fact, which is alleged as a second ground of the non-conformists claim on the justice of the country, though an universal acknowledgement is again pretended, should be disputable. Namely, "their loyalty to his ma-"jesty and the established government *;" and the sincerity "of their friendship to the public peace, "both in Church and State †." It might seem invidious to say, nor shall it be said, of the majority

* Case § 3. † Case.

of dissenters, that they are insincere in these professions. Were the actual feelings of the individuals the true standard of the principles of a party; the non-conformists of the present times might pass for a loyal body, friends to public peace. But the truth is, that when the first contentions, which have given rise to any party, are a little subsided; the majority, who from accidental circumstances, from birth and family connections, or perhaps, in a country like this, from connections in trade and commerce, give their names to it, and pass in the catalogue for its adherents, know nothing of its origin and real principles; and, while the tranquillity of public affairs suffers them to be governed by their own minds, are but loosely attached to it, and enter little into its views: and yet these same persons are easily wrought upon, and inspired with very different sentiments, if an unexpected turn in public affairs, offer a fair occasion to their leaders. Hence the real character of any sect or party hath, in truth, little connection with the general dispositions of its nominal adherents, in quiet times. The dispositions of the leaders, with respect to party views, make up the whole character of the party. It is yet within our memory, that numerous clans of Highlanders, which for many years back had been composed of peaceable and quiet subjects, no sooner heard their chieftain's pipe upon the hill, than they rose to a man, rebels armed.

Now if the leaders of the modern non-conformists are "hearty and sincere friends to the public peace, "both in Church and State*," whence is it, that the

* Case.

writings of many among them, capable of far better things, breathe a spirit of the most virulent malignity against the establishment? Whence is it, that they are used to treat the subject of civil liberty, in a manner that hath given too much reason to suspect, that the principles of a non-conformist in religion, and a republican in politics, are inseparably united? Can *they* wish the peace of the Church, who wish not its stability? Can they wish its stability, who think "that the prelatical hierarchy is a violation of reli-"gion both natural and revealed? That people, in "the communion of the Established Church, may "think themselves religious, as the deformed think "themselves handsome? Or may be religious, as "trees may be accidentally fruitful in an unfriendly "soil, but that the constitution is not religion nor "calculated to promote it? That the hierarchy, "considered as a corporation, is unconstitutional? "That it is baneful to learning? That prelacy hurts "morality? That the whole of the Church ritual "is hurtful to popular piety? That episcopacy is "neither of divine nor human right, but a human "wrong, suppressive of divine and human rights? "That it is EXECRABLE? That Wake, Potter, "Herring, Secker, all risqued Christianity to pre-"serve the establishment?" These are the sentiments inculcated by Mr. Robinson, in his *Plan of Lectures upon the Principles of Non-conformity:* a work approved, it is to be remembered, by the Eastern Association. How these sentiments, or the approbation of these sentiments, can be lodged in the same breast with *cordial and sincere friendship to the*

public peace, in Church and State *, is a mystery not easy to be explained.

Nor is it less difficult to understand, how a principle of genuine loyalty to any king, or attachment to any government but a mere democracy, can be reconciled to that impassioned fondness for the democratic form, which exults in the American revolution, as "the most important step in the progres-" sive course of human improvement, next to the in-" troduction of Christianity;" and places the glory of the American States in their emancipation from LORDS, from BISHOPS, and from KINGS †. Nor is it easy to understand, how good wishes to the compound of Church and State united, can consist with an opinion, that the demolition of the establishment is a thing so requisite, for the perfect reformation of religion; that any civil commotions are to be expected with complacency, to be desired rather than feared, which may be necessary, as doubtless great commotions will be necessary, for the attainment of that happy end ‡. That the most unexceptionable establishment of religion would be, that all the inhabitants of the country should be obliged to support some form of the Christian Religion. That even this establishment "would not be perfect liberty in mat-" ters of religion." But that "few persons would " object to it in *the present state of things*," because,

* Case.

† See Dr. Price's Observations upon the Importance of the American Revolution.

‡ See the conclusion of Dr. Priestley's History of Corruptions.

though not perfect liberty, "it might MAKE WAY "for it*."

While these are the avowed principles of its leaders, let them not pretend that friendship to the peace of Church and State, attachment to the government, and loyalty to the king, are the characters of non-conformity. Many non-conformists, it is confessed, the majority, it is hoped, are at present, in themselves, peaceable, well affected, loyal subjects. Every churchman will with pleasure recollect many of that character, within the circle of his own acquaintance. But what security are their private dispositions for the conduct of the party? What security for their own conduct, if any occasion should arise to stir up party zeal, while the spirit of the SOLÆMN LEAGUE and COVENANT breathes, as it does, in the approved writings of their most admired teachers?

The non-conformists urge a third claim, upon the impartiality of the State. This is founded on a supposed grievance, laid upon the Church of Scotland by the Corporation Act and the Test Act†, and upon the late repeal of the Irish Test‡.

It seems to be with no good grace, that the English non-conformists take up the cause of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to which they bear the same affection as to the English Church. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in their judgment, "differs from the Church of Rome as a kept mis-

* Priestley on the first Principles of Government, p. 201.

† Case § 8. ‡ Case § 9.

" tress differs from a street-walking prostitute *." The Church of Scotland can complain of no injustice, while her sons enjoy all the rights, which she stipulated for them at the Union. But let her state her own grievances, if any have arisen; she will deserve a respectful hearing. But at the same time let her beware of the insidious services of these officious advocates, the common enemies of all establishments; who would add her ruin to that of her sister church. For " episcopacy and presbytery they hold to be " equally intolerant †."

As for the non-conformists in Ireland, Ireland best knows what indulgences they may deserve, and what she may with safety grant. She must judge for herself; and so must England. The repeal of the Irish Test in 1779, was probably occasioned by the dread of a Spanish invasion. But what is the true use of Ireland's example? Eight years are not yet passed over, since the repeal took place. What is now the state of the Church of Ireland? What is the situation of the kingdom? Is the repeal of the Test justified, as a political measure, or is it not, by the present situation of the Church and kingdom? Let the question sleep. Its discussion might be more unpleasant, than it could be profitable. But let Great Britain beware.

If the claims of the non-conformists, upon the gratitude, the justice, and impartiality of the State, are thus weak in their foundations; the religious motives,

* See Robinson's Lectures upon Non-conformity.

† Robinson's Lectures upon Non-conformity.

which they urge for the repeal of the two acts in question, are of no greater force. These are now to be examined. They are these three:

1. That the application of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the secular ends of civil societies, is a profanation of that holy ordinance. For this, or nothing, is the amount of their second reason. "The "sacrament of the Lord's Supper, being a matter "purely of a religious nature, and being appointed "by our blessed Saviour, only for the remembrance "of his death, ought not to be applied to the secular "ends of civil societies*."

2. That these acts are snares for the consciences of men. "Since men may be compelled by their "necessities, or allured by secular advantages, to "do what they would not do, were they left to their "own choice†."

3. That particularly they are snares for the consciences of serious clergymen of the Established Church; and besides expose them even to vexatious prosecutions, for a conscientious discharge of a duty of their sacred office‡.

The first objection to the two acts in question, that they amount to a profanation of the Lord's Supper; the non-conformists owe to their great champion, bishop Hoadley: who made indeed the most of it. It would hardly have been now revived but upon a presumption that bishop Sherlock's reply might be forgotten, or would be overlooked, by the friends of the establishment. These laws, as that able writer

* Case § 2. † Case § 4. ‡ Case § 6.

hath clearly shown, suppose no application of this sacrament, on the part of the receiver, to any other than the original purpose; the religious commemoration of our Lord's sacrifice of himself for the sins of men. They only declare, that from the performance of this rite, after a certain manner, the State will think it safe to draw certain conclusions, concerning the principles of persons so performing it. And so little do they tend to any abuse or misapplication of the ordinance; that they evidently suppose a scrupulous attention to its original end, on the part of the communicant. His reverent opinion of its sanctity is indeed the basis of the legal conclusion. The real principles, upon which these laws were introduced, seem to be these.

Upon the restoration, it was deemed necessary for the preservation of the constitution, and to prevent, for the time to come, such mischiefs as religious differences, or the pretence of religious differences, had so lately produced; that persons ill affected to the Established Church should be excluded from certain places of trust and authority. Some criterion therefore was to be established, for distinguishing between the well and the ill affected. That the discrimination might be made in the least irksome manner to the subject, no subscription was required to articles of doctrine, no declared approbation of discipline and rites: but government seems to have looked out for some such mark as might be found in the ordinary habits and practices of every man's life, by which its best friends might be known from those whose affections were more doubtful. It was taken

for granted, that every true Christian must frequently commemorate the Redeemer's death, by that rite, which all true Christians confess our Lord himself appointed for that purpose; and that those Christians, who were not dissenters from the Established Church, must join in the celebration of this rite in their parish churches, after the manner of the Church of England. Thus the taking of the sacrament, after the manner of the Church, seemed to be such a mark, as government wished to find, of a friendly conformity. A mark which the voluntary habits of the subject's life afforded, which rendered explicit declarations unnecessary. That this interpretation of a citizen's religious acts, should be a profanation of those acts on the part of the community, or in any way improper or indecent, is a position which needs explanation.

The snare, which the Corporation Act and the Test Act, are supposed to spread for the consciences of men, is such a snare as might equally be pretended in every instance, in which the laws require the security of an oath; because cases will arise, in which perjury, were it to escape undetected, might be much for the secular advantage of the individual.

But of all the reasons that are alleged, for the repeal of these offensive laws, the pretence of the perplexities, in which the parochial clergy find their consciences entangled by them, and of the danger of vexatious prosecutions, to which that order stands exposed, is the most contemptible and ridiculous: although this, like the first of the three religious mo-

tives of repeal, is one of Hoadley's arguments. That it should have been used by him, only serves to show, to what miserable shifts great abilities may be reduced in the service of a weak cause; and the revival of it now, is a further argument of the presumption of our adversaries upon the supineness of Churchmen, as if they could hear this objection made, and forget, or neglect, to bring forward bishop Sherlock's confutation.

Both these dangers, it seems, arise the danger of a troubled conscience, and the danger of law-suits, from this circumstance; though how this circumstance should produce either, the whole phalanx of the bar, joined in consultation with all the civilians, canonists, casuists, and divines in Europe, might be at a loss to explain. These dangers both arise, from a repugnance between a certain exhortation, which the parish priest is directed by the Rubric to deliver to the congregation, when he gives notice of the celebration of the holy communion, and the requisitions of the Test Act. The exhortation "forbids blasphemers of God, slanderers of his word, adulterers, &c. "to come to the holy table: and yet the minister, "as the law now stands, (so the non-conformists "imagine) is bound to admit all such persons to the "sacrament, when they demand it as a qualification "for an office, or subject himself to a prosecution*." But is it possible, that any clergyman should be brought into this dilemma, by any contrariety between an exhortation, addressed to the consciences

* Case § 6.

of other men, and a law prescribing his own duty? It is indeed the official duty of every parochial minister, to enforce the solemn warnings of the public exhortation by private admonitions, where they seem to be needed. But if persons of profane, irreligious lives, warned of the danger of coming to the Lord's table without repentance, will nevertheless come, in defiance of that warning and have a right, under the letter or the construction of any law, to demand admission; the laws absolve the priest's conscience, and leave the impiety on the heads of those, who, warned of the danger, despise the sanctity of the institution. The priest, who hath exhorted, warned and admonished, hath done his utmost; unless, beside the authority of exhortation, the law hath given him a power to REPEL.

Now this is indeed the case. Every parish priest hath power by the Rubric, and the Rubric is, no less than the Test Act, the law of the land; he hath legal power by the Rubric, to "repel from the Lord's "table, every one who is an open and notorious evil "liver, and every one that hath done any wrong to "his neighbour, by word or deed, so that the con-"gregation be thereby offended, provided that he "give account of the same to the ordinary within "fourteen days after, at the furthest." Now the conscience of any minister may be reasonably, indeed, alarmed, if through a wilful carelessness he hath stopped short at exhortation, in any case in which he ought to have exercised his power of repulsion. And his conscience may be the more alarmed, for such an omission of his spiritual duty, if he knows

how the law really stands; and is not misled by that popular error, which hath imposed upon the non-conformists. The Test Act hath neither abolished, nor in the least degree abridged, the power of repulsion, with which the Rubric invests him. No blasphemer of God, no slanderer of his word, no open and notorious evil liver would recover damages under the Test Act, against a minister who should repel him. Nothing in the Test Act requires the admission of such persons. Nor is the minister liable to any prosecution, under the Test Act, to which he would not be liable, if the Test Act were repealed. An action might still be brought, by a person repelled upon the pretence of any crime; and if the minister should not be able to make proof of the crime alleged, as the ground of the repulsion, damages might perhaps be given. But then in repelling for the suspicion of a crime, of which proof should be wanting, the minister would have acted indiscreetly, and would have exceeded his powers, But let the minister take care to act in strict conformity to the Rubric, let him prove the crime, or the evil life of the repelled person, and the prosecution must be dismissed with costs. For the Rubric is law, and as bishop Sherlock says, with his usual animation, it is as much a rule to his majesty's judges in Westminster hall, as to the curate of a parish. Indeed the Test Act, when it requires that persons appointed to certain offices, shall take the sacrament, evidently supposes, that none would be appointed to such offices, who should be unworthy to receive it. This law was enacted in times when religion was more regarded,

than it is in the present: and it was within the intention of the legislature, to exclude from certain situations, not only religious non-conformists, but irreligious churchmen. To exclude those unsound members even of the Established Church, who by the scandal of their lives, should be inadmissible to the Lord's table. If the effect of the law hath not perfectly answered the intention, the failure is owing to the relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline: and the true remedy for this, is not to repeal the laws, but to provide for their better execution.

The reasons, by which the non-conformists would persuade the political expedience of the measure, which they recommend, remain to be examined. It will appear, that their plea is weak, in the part where it ought to be strongest.

The first argument for the political expedience of the measure, is not expressly stated among the pretended reasons; but it is suggested in the narrative, with which the reasons are prefaced, and it is founded on the original intention of the act. "The Test "Act, it is alleged, as the title sets forth, was made "wholly against Papists, and not to prevent any "danger, which could happen to the nation or "church from the dissenters." Whence it may seem a fair inference, that it is an abuse of the act, to turn it against dissenters. Now it is true, that the title of the act mentions only dangers from popish recusants. But it is equally true, that the provisions of the act equally affect all dissenters. And this general operation of the act, against them all, was a thing foreseen and intended. Else what was the sin-

gular disinterestedness of the presbyterians *in contributing to the passing of the bill?* And what was the pertinence of alderman Love's patriotic declaration, in the name of his party, that it was their desire, that "nothing with relation to them might intervene, "to stop the security which the nation and the pro- "testant religion might derive from the Test Act?" What was the virtue, or the sense of this declaration, if it was not foreseen that the Test Act would have relation to dissenters? And why was the act so framed, as to have relation to dissenters, if no danger from them, to the nation or the church, was apprehended? The truth seems to be, that the dissenters were, equally with papists, the original objects of the act: and Mr. alderman Love, and his party, had the good policy, to make a merit of submission, to a measure which they had not a sufficient strength of interest to defeat.

Again the similarity between the Corporation Act and the Test Act, is so great, as to create a reasonable presumption, that the two laws have nearly the same object. But the Corporation Act, which was the earlier of the two, was made, without any particular reference to papists, for the express and sole purpose of excluding dissenters. This fact is so notorious, from the history of the times, and from the preamble of the act itself, that the non-conformists in their case pretend not to deny it: but they would artfully ascribe it to the "great heat and violence "of the period," in which that act was passed. The truer account of the matter, is, that it was passed in a time of extreme danger; of danger from those

turbulent republicans, who had possessed themselves of the superior offices in corporations during the usurpation; insomuch that without this act the restoration had been incompleat. The same dangers would undoubtedly return, if the same description of men should be able, at any future time, to intrude themselves into the same situations. The Corporation Act, with great wisdom and with justice, hath provided for their perpetual exclusion. The Test Act, by a similar exclusion of the same persons, together with the Roman catholics, from offices of another kind, provides against the same, or equal, dangers in another quarter. Thus the two laws explain each other, and as it would be unreasonable in the Roman catholics to claim exemption from the Corporation Act, by virtue of the legislature's original intention; it is equally unreasonable in the dissenters, upon any such ground, to claim an exemption from the Test. Papists were not more the special object of the one, than dissenters of the other.

After all, the actual sense of these laws depends not on the comparison of the two; nor on any artificial construction of either, taken by itself; nor on the intention of the legislature at the time when the laws were first passed, as may be collected from history, nor even as it is declared in the preambles of the laws themselves. The authoritative interpreter of the statutes, is the Statute Book. Now whatever might be the particular views of that parliament, by which the Test Act was first established; subsequent acts have expressly turned the sense and intent of that statute against dissenters of all denominations.

The Toleration Act itself enumerating former laws, which shall not be construed to extend to those dissenters, who shall comply with certain specified conditions, expressly reserves the Test Act, as a statute, which shall still extend to them. It matters therefore little, what might be the original purpose of the act. It now stand in the Statute Book, a declared provision for the security of the Church, by law established, against dissenters of all denominations. It is to be considered indeed, as a clause of the Toleration Act, copied into it from the older statutes.

It will hardly be denied, that the power which may enact new laws, may apply an old law to a new purpose. It could not, therefore, be pretended, that the extension of the Test Act by the parliament of William and Mary, had its sense been really extended, would have introduced any contradiction, or inconsistence into the body of the statute law; although the original purpose of the act had been as strictly confined to popish recusants, as it appears to be in the preamble of the law as it is cited in the case of the protestant dissenters. "The design of "the act, says the Case, was, as the preamble de- "clares, *to quiet the minds of his majesty's good* "*subjects, by preventing dangers which might happen* "*from popish recusants.*" Were these the exact words of the preamble, as every one must imagine, who knows the act only by the Case, and sees these words distinguished there by the Italic character; the declaration would indeed be, that the end of the act was single: namely, to prevent dangers from popish recusants, as a means of quieting the minds

of his majesty's good subjects, alarmed with the apprehension of those dangers. Still this declaration, of the law's first end, would not have hindered, but that the revolution parliament might apply the law to another end, to the prevention of other dangers. But the true words of the preamble are these: *For preventing dangers which may happen from popish recusants, and quieting the minds of his majesty's good subjects, be it enacted,* &c. These words may be understood to declare a double intention of the act: an intention to prevent dangers from popish recusants in particular, and an intention of quieting the minds of his majesty's good subjects, disturbed also with the apprehension of other dangers. The Toleration Act, accepting the preamble in this larger meaning, which is indeed the most consistent with the provisions in the body of the statute, re-enacts the law, with an express direction of it to this more general end.

Upon the revolution, when a bill was brought into parliament for abrogating the oaths of allegiance to the abdicated king, upon its second reading in the upper house, it was proposed to annex a clause for a repeal of the Test, with respect to protestant dissenters. The additional clause was rejected by a great majority; but not without a protest of some noble lords, against the omission. From this protest the non-conformists borrow a second argument for the expediency of the repeal, which, like the first, appears in the narrative, not in the list of their reasons. "A greater caution, said the dissentient "peers, ought not to be required from such as are

" admitted into offices, than from the members of " the two houses of parliament; who are not obliged " to receive the sacrament to enable them to sit in " either house."

This reasoning is not so sound as it is specious. In the upper house, the temporal peers claim their seats by inheritance: and men may not be so easily deprived of their hereditary rights, which would be the effect of a Test Law extended to the peerage for their seats, as they may be excluded from what is no right at all, from places conferred by the favour of the crown. With respect to the lower house, although no Test is required of those who are once elected; yet to conclude, that the Test Laws in no way reach them, is a fallacy. No Test is required of persons once elected, because the Corporation Act, while it remains in force, will always effect the exclusion of dissenters, by obstructing their elections. Not their total exclusion. It is not to be wished, that they should be totally excluded from either house. It is fit that some few should sit in both houses, were it only that from self-interest, they will always be vigilant guardians of the toleration. No danger is to be apprehended from dissenters in parliament, unless they were to become a majority. A majority in the upper house they never can become, without such an impolitic enlargement of the peerage, as is little to be apprehended. A majority in the house of commons they never can become, unless the dissenting interest first gets an ascendency in corporations. It is one great use of the Corporation Act, though not its immediate end, that it nips this

danger in the bud: insomuch that whilst this law shall remain in force, it will be unnecessary to require a Test of the particular persons returned to parliament. For so long as dissenters are not a majority of either house, and are not introduced in such numbers, as might enable them, with the addition of what weak churchmen they might win over to their side upon particular questions, to make occasional majorities; parliament, though it may contain some dissenters, is still collectively a churchman. The Corporation Act, by checking the too luxuriant growth of the dissenting interest, and the prerogative of the crown, by keeping the peerage pure, are as it were the Tests, which severally answer for the principles of either house of parliament. To this it may be added, that a seat in parliament, is not the situation, in which the non-conformist can secretly promote the interest of his party. He can carry no measure by himself. The concurrence of a majority must be obtained. And this concurrence cannot otherwise be obtained than by an avowal of his principles, and a fair submission of his schemes to public discussion. The Test Laws are intended to prevent the mischief, which the same man might do in secret, and by himself; by an artful use of power lodged in his own hands, to be exercised by his own discretion. The same person therefore, who may safely be admitted to a seat in either house, may be unfit to hold an office in a corporation, or a place under the crown: "and a greater caution ought to be required from "persons admitted into offices, than from members "of parliament."

A third argument, for the political expedience of the proposed repeal, occurs in the fourth paragraph of the Reasons. It is briefly this: that the Test is a mean insufficient to its end. That it is no real or effectual security for the Church of England, because "the occasional receiving of the Lord's supper, as "a qualification for a place, cannot imply, that those, "who thus receive it, mean to declare their full and "entire approbation of the whole constitution and "frame of the established Church." If a fence is weak, it should be strengthened; if a wall may be jumped over, it should be raised. This argument only proves the expediency of Queen Ann's statute against occasional conformity, and deserves no farther answer. It is mentioned indeed as a farther imperfection of the Test Act, which it may be said, could not be remedied by any law against occasional conformity, that it excludes not infidels. Notorious infidels are excluded by an older law; the Rubric. If concealed infidels will defy the sanctity of the ordinance, they will equally defy the sanctity of an oath. Yet oaths are useful.

The sixth paragraph of the Reasons, contains a string of reasons so preposterously arranged; that it is too evident, the framers of the Case feared and shunned the perspicuity, which arises from order, lest it should betray the weakness of their argument. First it is said, "the repeal of the Corporation and "Test Act would be a relief to many of his ma-"jesty's faithful subjects." Then, that "it would "lay no difficulty or hardship upon any." Then, in particular, "that it would no way affect the esta-

" blished Church." Of these three reasons, the first two are evidently misplaced. That the repeal would not lay difficulty, or hardship, upon any of his majesty's faithful subjects should be proved, before its efficacy for the relief of others can be alleged as a reason for it. For the relief of any set of subjects, however faithful, cannot without injustice be attempted, by a measure oppressive to others not less deserving. The second of these first two positions, is again dependent upon the third. For if the contrary, of what is assumed in the third position, should be true; if the greatest mischiefs would be likely to ensue from the repeal to the established Church; if its ruin would be, the remote perhaps, but the certain consequence; then it cannot be said, that none would be harmed by a measure detrimental to so great a majority of the people.

And how is it that the repeal would no way affect the established Church? Why truly " religion and " the national Church were established before these " acts were passed; and would continue to be esta- " blished were they totally repealed. The doctrine, " the discipline and privileges of the Church, would " remain exactly as they are at present. Its consti- " tution and its form of government are not secured " by these acts, nor would it be injured by the total " repeal of them."

Now it is true that the Corporation Act and the Test Act are not the laws, by which the 39 articles are ratified; the use of the Liturgy prescribed; the tithes appointed for the maintenance of the clergy; or the power and privileges of the several orders

and offices of the hierarchy defined. These laws, therefore, neither establish the Church, nor create its rights Nor is any man's property in his money in the public funds, or in the furniture of his house, created by the laws, by which forgery and burglary are made capital offences. Yet these laws secure the use and possession of property, which other laws create. Property would not long continue in the owners hands, were these laws repealed; nor would the value of the right be much, when the possession should become precarious. That relation, which the laws against violence and fraud bear to laws of property, the Corporation Act and the Test Act bear to the laws, by which the Church is established. The establishment is not made, but it is guarded by them: just as a gentleman's property in his grounds is not made, but it is guarded by his park-fence and by his garden-wall. Notwithstanding therefore, that these acts are not the very foundations of the establishment; notwithstanding that were they repealed, its foundations would remain; that the doctrine, discipline, and privileges of the Church would remain, *in law*, what they are at present: yet it is not true, "that its constitution and its form of government "are not *secured* by these acts, and would not be "injured by the repeal of them." With equal truth it might be said, that a building is not secured by a buttress, and would not be injured by its removal; because the buttress is no part of the foundation. But buildings have been known to fall, while the foundations have been unimpaired. And how long our national Church should stand if these two but

tresses should be taken away, would depend upon the zeal and cunning of the non-conformists, to improve the opportunities of its gradual ruin, which this weak policy would afford them. To say, that the repeal of these acts would bring no hardship upon any, when it would expose the Church to so great danger, is a poor sophism. Perhaps no hardship would, for some considerable time, be felt by individuals. But the utility, and the justice indeed, of a public measure is to be estimated, not so much by its immediate effect upon the fortunes and the happiness of individuals, as by its remote influence upon the common weal. And the contrivers of that measure are to be execrated, which tends finally to public calamity, although no one citizen should perceive himself the worse for it a whole century.

And now if the position were admissible, which it is not, that the repeal of these acts would bring no hardship upon any; yet who are they, those many faithful subjects of his majesty, to whom it would afford relief? Not churchmen; for they cannot be aggrieved by the laws, which are the security of their rights. But our LOYAL nonconformists would be relieved by the repeal. From what grievance? From the grievance of being excluded from public offices of profit and authority. But if the law, as it now stands, exclude them from these, it also excuses them from offices of burthen. It was the solemn opinion of the judges, particularly of Mr. Justice Forster and Mr. Justice Wilmot, in the famous case of Allen Evans, that the immunity on the one hand compensates the inability on the other; and, as equal forces,

acting in opposite directions, destroy each other's separate effects, the total effect of the Test Laws, upon the body of the dissenters, is neither grievance nor advantage. But where no grievance hath taken place, no relief can be afforded.

Upon the whole, it appears, that the plea of the non-conformists, for the repeal of the two acts in question, fails in every part. That they have no claim upon the gratitude, the justice, or the impartiality of the British government: That their objections to the sacramental Test, as an application of a religious ordinance, to the secular ends of civil society, and as a snare for the consciences of men, are frivolous: and that the whole weight of argument from political expedience is on the contrary side. Upon this view of the merits of their case, a regular detail of reasons upon our own side of the question, in addition to those which the discussion hath drawn forth, may be spared. The members of the legislative council will not forget, that these acts lay no restraint upon the subject, which is not equally laid upon the crown itself: That the Test Act is one of the laws, which are declared perpetual by the union: That one great end of the revolution was to preserve the established Church; and "that to maintain and "preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church "of England," is a part of the coronation oath. A late republication renders the bare mention of these points sufficient. With what decency subjects may solicit a liberty, which the constitution hath denied to royalty itself; urge the repeal of laws interwoven with the treaty which unites the kingdoms; attempt

a measure which would commit the majesty of Britain with engagements of which Heaven is the witness and guarantee; our non-conformists had done well to consider.—They have not considered. But it is little to be feared, but that the British parliament will better know its own dignity, than to follow the example of their precipitance. Parliament will consider the measure both in itself and in its consequences. If the measure in itself be disrespectful to the crown, and infractive of the union; it cannot be adopted. If in its natural consequences, it threaten the heaviest mischiefs; the wisdom of parliament will not trust the public weal to the precarious security of fair pretensions. In the year 1772, when the dissenting ministers were petitioning for relief from the subscriptions required by the first of W. and M. public promises were made in the name of the body, in the strongest words which language could supply, that the dissenting clergy, if they might be gratified in that request, would esteem their toleration perfect, nor ever extend their wishes to any further indulgence *. The dissenters now solicit a repeal of the Test Laws. The strongest assurances, it is said will be given in the name of the party, that gratified in this request, they never will extend their views to any further indulgence. The promise is in itself suspicious. To what further indulgences can their views at any time extend, if once

* See a Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, with regard to their late application to Parliament, by Andrew Kippis, D. D. London, printed for G. Robinson in Pater-Noster-Row, 1772.

they shall be put upon an even footing with the best friends of the establishment? Yes,—Notwithstanding their declared enmity to ecclesiastical establishments in general, their views may extend to something further, than a free admission of their laity to civil offices. The public hath been told, that it would be but equitable, that one Church, at least, in every considerable town should be set apart for the dissenters; and that such a portion of the tithes, ET CÆTERA, of that district should be allotted to the minister, as should be proportioned to the numbers of his followers *. It hath even been suggested, that a time may come, and may be at no great distance, when a *portion* of the tithes and the ET CÆTERA will not suffice: When under the authority of an Arian or Socinian parliament (which nothing indeed might so soon produce as the repeal of the Corporation Act) the rash defenders of the present system, deposed from their dignities, and plundered of their emoluments, may be thankful if they escape the horrors of a jail †. Since then things may come within ambition's view, far beyond what is now demanded; what security can the non-conformists give, that some ten years hence, they will feel themselves more firmly bound by the promises of 1787, than they are now bound by the promises of 1772? The contrariety, of their present conduct and their late engagements, casts no imputation of insincerity upon

* See Dr. Priestley's Importance of Free Enquiry, page 44—46.

† See Dr. Priestley's Second Letter to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, page 88.

those who ventured to pass their word. It only shews, that all such promises, in the name of a party, are in truth, symptoms of certain forebodings in their own minds, that the very next step in the natural course of things, to their present pursuit, is to attempt, what they would engage shall never be attempted; and it shews besides, that the fairest intentions of individuals cannot govern the conduct of a party, or avert the natural consequences of any public measure. Should the Test Law be now repealed, dissenters will be dissenters still Their influence will be increased, while their prejudices will remain entire. Their prejudices will incite them to use their increased influence, first for the reformation of religion; and then, since their politics are for the most part singular, for the bettering of the State. Government will have thrown down the best barrier it had to oppose to innovation; and the work of reformation will go on, without obstruction, till one stone will not be left standing upon another of the admired fabrick of the BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

APPENDIX.

THAT full justice may be done to the merits of that inestimable work, which, in the year 1778, received the aprobation of the HARLOW SYNOD; some extracts from it shall be given here, which have been inadvertently omitted in their proper place. They are passages, which set in the strongest light the loyalty of the writer himself, and that of the members of the applauding synod.

"DESPOTISM is the desideratum of most Princes." (Robinson's Lectures, p. 31.)

"That so much episcopacy in a State, so much despotism, is a certain truth." (p. 32.)

"Princes know no heresy but patriotism, and no orthodoxy but despotism." (p. 40.)

These are not only avowed, as the political principles of the non-conformists, but every dissenting minister is earnestly exhorted by Brother Robinson, and the HARLOW SYNOD, to press the importance of them upon the minds of his catechumens; and to persuade them, that "to inculcate these prin-"ciples in the Church, is the best preservative of the "State." (p. 32.) It should seem, however, that this aphorism is to be understood with reference only to the present state of things. The supreme efficacy

of this State-preservative is to be acknowledged, so long only as the State shall ungraciously and unjustly with-hold from the pious non-conformist the power of inculcating his principles, by more effectual means than writing and declamation. If ever the non conformists should acquire their just share of power, they will doubtless find better means of disseminating their principles, for the State's preservation, than the pens and eloquence of their pastors, supported by the decrees of their synods.

Not to fatigue the reader's patience, with too great a length or variety of extract, it shall suffice to remark in general, that whoever would form his mind to a clear apprehension of the idea, which exactly corresponds with the word loyalty, as it is used by the non-conformists, should never lay out of his hand, by day or night, till he has gotten them both by heart, Mr. Robinson's *Plan of Lectures upon Non-conformity*, and Mr. S. Palmer's *Protestant Dissenter's Catechism.* Two books, small in size, cheap in price, but rich in matter: not indeed containing any one principle of the Christian religion, or of any religion under the sun (except some abused texts may be called principles) but to make amends for this defect, replete with wise maxims of general policy, curious passages of British history, and sage remarks upon the constitution of our country ecclesiastical and civil. Of which this one may serve for a specimen: "The "supreme head of the Church of England," says Mr. Robinson, by whose mouth let it never be forgotten, that the HARLOW SYNOD speaks: "The "supreme head of the Church of England is a king,

" or a queen, Lutheran, presbyterian, prelatical, or " popish." (p. 19.) To give a colour to this calumny, it is alleged, that the Church hath existed under princes of all these different persuasions. But what matters it, under what princes it HATH existed, when the laws have long since provided, that the wearer of the crown shall hold communion with none but the established Church? And yet upon the pretence of what hath been, the non-conformist youth are to be trained to the belief that a popish king might still be the constitutional head of the Church of England.

TRACT VII.

THE

CLAIM

OF

SOME ENGLISH PROTESTANTS TO GREATER LIBERTY THAN THEY NOW ENJOY.

By ANTHONY ELLYS, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

AFTER having used my endeavours to justify our spiritual liberty from the objection of the Romanists against it, I should have put an end to the first part of these papers, but the particular state of our nation, and my earnest desire that you should be able to judge rightly of it, oblige me to add some further considerations. You are sensible, that numbers of our countrymen, who, I believe, are not wanting in affection to the civil part of the present establishment, profess to be dissatisfied with the measure of liberty, religious and civil, they now enjoy under it, and think themselves entitled to considerably more from reasons of justice and of religion, as well as from considerations of national advantage; and, accordingly, some persons amongst them have, in several late books, been free in their complaints against

those who have not given way to the applications the dissenters have made for that increase of liberty to which they pretend; nor can we deny, but some things have been urged in defence of their cause which deserve to be considered, not (as they have been hitherto) with the warmth and vehemence with which religious or civil disputes are generally attended, but with the freedom and sedateness of enquiry which are requisite in order to the discovery of truth.

In this state of things, I cannot but think it desirable and necessary, that you, who are likely so soon to have a seat in the legislature, should be duly apprised whether their claims be well grounded or not, that (in a point which is certainly of great moment to the constitution of our country, and not a little difficult in itself) you may take the side which you find to be right; to which end, I shall lay before you, with candor and benevolence, and, according to the best of my judgment, with truth, the things of the most weight that have been alleged on each side of the question; and I do this the rather, because I shall endeavour to leave the common track of the controversy, and put it in some measure on a new foot, by which it will be much shortened, and, I hope, rendered much more clear and easy to you.

But before we consider what grounds those protestants, who separate from the Church of England, have for their complaints, it may be proper to acquaint you with the particulars of that spiritual liberty which they actually do or may enjoy as our laws stand at present.

By the first of William and Mary, supposing they perform the conditions of that act *, they are excepted from all penalties laid upon them by several preceding acts of parliament. And by 5 George I. chap. iv. the acts against occasional conformity and schism were repealed. So that now they may,

First, hold assemblies for divine worship, after their own way, at whatever times and places they think fit, after the place of their meeting shall have been certified to the bishop of the diocese, or to the archdeacon of that archdeaconry, or to the justice of the peace at the general quarter sessions, &c. and keep their doors open, without any fear of being disquieted or disturbed. They are not obliged to celebrate any of the days which our Church keeps holy, except only the Lord's day.

Secondly, every particular congregation amongst them may choose its own pastors, without being obliged to apply to any other person to approve or lay hands upon them. And, as the general practice now is, those ministers are under no public restraint but what the congregation lays upon them, as to what they shall teach. For though, indeed, by the Toleration Act, they are obliged to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, excepting the 34th, 35th, 36th, and part of the 20th, in order to their being qualified for preaching, yet they are very seldom called upon to make, or do actually make, this subscription; in which forbearance, indeed, I am humbly of

* The Toleration Act.

opinion, that our bishops and other governors act rightly and agreeably to the genuine principles of toleration; from a sense of which it is very probable that the dissenting ministers will continue to have this liberty. In these two respects the dissenters have more liberty than the members of the Church of England.

Thirdly, as the Schism Act has been repealed, they may have schools and academies taught by persons of their own persuasion, for the education of their children in it according to their own principles; and they have actually at present considerable numbers of such schools and academies.

Fourthly, they may hold assemblies, when they think fit, not only for the public worship of God, but also to consult about their religious and civil interests, and have actually done so on several occasions (which is more than the clergy of the Church of England, in their public capacity, are allowed to do, without a writ of summons from the crown). They did so in their attempts some years ago to get the Test Act repealed.

Fifthly, they may excommunicate or exercise any other acts of discipline against any of their members, and even over their ministers, without any appeal possible to be made against them to the crown, or any other jurisdiction, which likewise is more than the Church of England can do.

Sixthly, they may safely write and publish whatever books they please, in a proper argumentative way, in defence of their own religion, or in oppo-

sition to the established Church; which they have freely done, and sometimes even in an invective way. And,

Seventhly, they may hold any civil office, if, at their entrance upon it, they only once take the oaths required, and the communion in the established Church.

From this account it is visible, that our dissenting brethren have all the liberty that can be necessary in a religious view, in order to their salvation. The chief questions to be considered, in regard to our safety, as well as theirs, are,

First, whether the schism, that now unhappily subsists between the dissenters and the Church of England, be justly chargeable on the former or on the latter?

Secondly, whether any alterations in our Liturgy be necessary to be made, in order to gain the dissenters? And,

Thirdly, whether the dispositions, occasioned by that schism in some of the dissenters, with regard to the establishment of the Church of England, be, or be not, a sufficient reason for excluding the persons so disposed from a capacity of offices of trust and profit in the civil state?

With regard to the first of these questions, every one must be sensible how very great a stress the Gospel of Christ lays on charity and religious unity between his disciples. For there is nothing more clear, or more strongly urged, or more frequently repeated in the New Testament, than the union, charity, and affection that ought constantly to be

preserved amongst Christians. This unity and affection our Lord made a principal and essential mark of being his disciples; and in order to keep it up constantly amongst them, he commanded them to meet together for his worship and service, and therein to make frequent commemoration of his death in the eucharist, which represents them as all members of one spiritual body, which is Christ, and therefore members one of another.

Now after this to divide, and (which is generally and naturally the consequence) meet in separate places for religious worship, in profest opposition to each other: this opposition and separation cannot, in the ordinary course of things, be made without producing contention, animosity, and ill-will to each other; and must, certainly, both in its own nature, and as a breach of Christ's command, be a grievous sin in those who are justly blameable on account of this discord and consequent separation. As to the fact of the separation of the dissenters from the Church of England, it is well known to have been made on their part; but in their own defence they allege, that they were obliged in conscience to make it.

Now there may, indeed, in some cases be a necessity for making such a one; viz. where any Church or body of Christians will not admit others to communicate with them, unless they do somewhat that is really unlawful. In that case the obligation to hold religious communion ceases; for we are not to do evil that good may come. We ought in such a case to abstain from the communion of such a corrupt

and imposing Church; and this I have shewn to be the case between us of the Church of England and the Church of Rome. But is this the case between the protestant dissenters and the Church of England? Does this Church impose any necessary terms of her communion which are really and in themselves unlawful? Perhaps you will see the contrary, if you will trouble yourself to peruse, with attention, even the following short observations on the dispute between us. I have not here meddled with their objections against ministerial conformity; because no dissenter can be obliged, either in law or conscience, to be a minister in our Church. If then they do not like the terms of ministering in it, they are not compelled to it: they may communicate with it, as laymen; and in so doing, they will not be obliged to any thing that can, with any colour, be reckoned sinful. I have, therefore, only considered their objections to lay-conformity.

Now to vindicate themselves in abstaining even from lay-conformity, some of them have vehemently objected to particular practices required in our Church, as being sinful; viz. to the use of sponsors, and of the cross, and the thanksgiving for the supposed regeneration of all persons, in baptism; to the manner of confirmation; to the improper translation of the psalms; to the reading apocryphal lessons in the service of the Church, and the Athanasian creed; to some passages in the burial service; and to the obligation of kneeling at the sacrament of the eucharist.

But must not any one, who considers the nature and design of these things, see there is no ground for this heavy charge? Is there any immorality in providing some other persons, besides parents, to take care of the pious education of infants? This is all our Church means to do; and this must ordinarily or often have good effects.

The use of the cross in baptism is professedly designed for no other purpose, but to signify to the by-standers, by a visible sign and token, as well as by words, that the baptised child, as all other members of the Church, is to embrace the service of Christ, notwithstanding all temporal hardships. And can there be any hurt in this? Kneeling in the Lord's Supper is declared to be practised, not from any intention of adoring the sacramental bread and wine then bodily received, or any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood, but only to signify our humble sense of, and gratitude for, the immense benefits we have received by our Saviour's death on our behalf. Though while he was on earth he condescended to let his apostles sit or lie in a more familiar posture with him at his table, yet now that he is exalted to his glory in heaven a more humble posture is properer for those whose hearts are duly affected. The like remarks may be made about the use of the surplice, of a set liturgy, and several other things blamed by the dissenters.

These things are so clear, that the late Dr. Calamy, who was generally allowed to be one of the ablest men amongst the dissenters of his time

(though, indeed, he charges the practices above-mentioned as sinful) yet in other places he expressly owns, that the things added by our Church in divine service (meaning the things above-mentioned) are not in themselves sinful to be complied with *; his meaning was, that they only become so in those by whom they are unwarrantably imposed †.

Now this is putting the matter on quite a different foot, and goes upon a principle, which, indeed, the dissenters have always much insisted upon. This principle is, that "nothing is lawful to be practised "in the worship of God, besides the necessary cir- "cumstances of it, unless it has been appointed by "by God himself in the holy Scripture. He only "knows what will be acceptable to him; and for "men to add any other practices in his worship, "more than what he himself has ordained, is that "will-worship which is condemned in several places "of the Scripture."

Now with regard to this principle, we freely own, that "nothing can be lawfully practised in the wor- "ship of God, as being in itself necessary to please "and propitiate him, or to be a certain effectual "mean of conveying his grace to us, but what he "himself has plainly commanded; for men to add "things to his worship, with this view and pre- "sumption, would be, indeed, *will-worship* ‡, of "which the Colossians of old were, and the Ro- "manists of late are, guilty." But nothing of this

* See Doctor Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 560, &c.

† Defence of moderate Non-conformity, p. 81, 82.

‡ Col. ii. 23.

kind can be justly charged on the few ceremonial practices in the Church of England. We do not practise them as being necessary to please or propitiate God, or as certainly effectual to convey his grace to us; we only look upon them as generally useful to make good impressions upon us, and dispose us the more to perform our duty as he has commanded it *. And this being only acting in pursuance of his commands, cannot ever be unlawful when the ceremonies have, or are likely to have, this good effect; as, in the burial office, the ceremony of ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The use of dust and ashes was allowed by Calvin, as rending of clothes, striking the breast, and sacred music (our Saviour and the apostles *sung an hymn* †; *if any be merry, let him sing psalms* ‡;) womens praying with their heads covered, men with their heads uncovered §. Circumstances of one kind or another external worship must always have been; and some there may be, though not always necessary, yet in several cases useful to promote greatly the good ends of this worship.

* The whole synagogue service was not of divine but human institution. See Potter's Church Government, p. 308. Where see other things of this kind. See also Socrates's Eccl. Hist. lib. xi. c. 22.

Baptism was added by the Jews as such a significant ceremony, previous to circumcision, without any divine authority; yet our Saviour himself submitted to it, and reckoned it a part of righteousness so to do, Matt. iii. 15. He did so to the feast of the dedication of the temple.

† Matt. xxvi. 30. ‡ James v. 13. § 1 Cor. xi. 4, 5.

Now the same reasons that make it fit that the worship itself should be practised, must be of force to render those circumstances lawful and expedient to be added. However, it was not proper that these, or any other such circumstances, should be enjoined in the holy Scripture for perpetual use, because those usages which in one age and country may be very conducive to promote piety, in another may tend to have a very different effect; and, therefore, our Lord and his apostles did not think fit to enjoin in the Scripture any circumstances in his worship as what were to be unchangeable: he left things of this kind to be ordained to edification by the several governors of his Church in all ages: and in giving to them authority to act in these points as should be fit; he also laid all private Christians under an obligation of obeying such injunctions that should really serve to promote true piety and edification. This was the import of those apostolical directions to *let all things be done decently, and in order; let all things be done to edifying* *, &c. It is plainly to be supposed, that all things relating to religious worship were not settled in the Scripture: and if the governors of the Church act agreeably to these general directions in any additional ceremonies which they enjoin to be practised (provided they be not in too great number, so as to be inconvenient in divine worship) these injunctions of theirs are certainly lawful, and ought to be obeyed by all private Christians.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 40. 26.

Some persons have entertained a notion, that whatever is neither commanded nor forbidden in the holy Scripture, as to the worship of God, is a part of Christian liberty, upon which the governors of Church or State ought not to intrench by their commands or prohibitions *. And that if at any time they do so in any instances, though in themselves lawful to be obeyed, yet private Christians ought not to obey them, for fear of giving countenance to this usurped authority, and encouraging, by their submission to these commands, the imposition of many more of the like nature, that may prove of disservice to religion, as well as burthensome to them. But this notion of the extent of Christian liberty in these points is very wrong; for God, in order to the preservation and promoting a right practice of religion, intended, as I have said, that besides the practices which he ordains in Scripture, all other fit means or helps towards them should be ordained, from time to time, by the governors of his Church †. And therefore, when such are ordained, it is no part of Christian liberty to refuse to submit to them. God requires such submission and obedience as a reasonable and necessary condition of Christian communion; and disobedience is a blameable and perverse breach of unity and order in the Church, which God will not fail to punish.

But, perhaps, you may think, as others have done,

* See, about not offending Christians by unnecessary impositions, Locke's Letter on Toleration and Dr. Clarke's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 38.

† See Mason's Sermon, p. 10, on this point of liberty.

that even admitting Church governors have sufficient authority to enjoin ceremonial practices that are fit to be enjoined, and private Christians ought to submit to them; yet where the advantage of continuing them is not very great, and where numbers of Christians are, though unduly, yet so far actually offended at them as that, without hurting their consciences, they cannot comply with them, it cannot but be right, and the duty of governors in such cases, to lay aside these ceremonial practices, or leave them indifferent: for does not Christian charity, and a regard to the weakness of our brethren, require this conduct? Are there not several precepts and instances in the Scripture to that purpose? viz. in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans, ver. 1, 2, 3, &c.*: and accordingly, ought not the ceremonial practices, which are contested and charged as sinful by the dissenters, to be laid aside, in order to open a way for their coming into our communion? Might not the use of the cross in baptism, and the use of sponsors, might not kneeling in the communion, be left indifferent? Might not the apocryphal lessons be laid aside, and some passages in the liturgy and burial office be altered, &c.? These things have been several times proposed, even by eminent persons in the communion of the Church of England; and, therefore, cannot be supposed likely to hurt our Church, whilst they might gratify and gain even many amongst the dissenters. Must not Christian

* See what Bishop Taylor says, Liberty of Prophecying, p. 353, 354, about the duty of particular Churches in allowing communion.

charity and condescension to our brethren, even supposing them weak and in the wrong, require that we should lay aside these things? To this I answer, that we ought, undoubtedly, to take any measures conducive to conciliate the good will of our dissenting brethren, and to bring them over into our Church; provided,

First, that these measures will be likely to gain over any considerable numbers of them, without being offensive to others, for whom we ought to have equal, if not greater, concern; and that withall they will be, in no respect, detrimental to the welfare of our public establishment in Church and State. All these circumstances are of importance, and ought to be considered and examined with care, before any thing can be rightly determined of this kind: and the first enquiry proper to be made is, whether these concessions would be sufficient and effectual to satisfy any considerable number of our dissenting brethren, so far as to bring them over to our communion; for unless they will be likely to do this it will not be worth while to make so great an alteration.

Now the right way to judge about this question must be, to recollect what the avowed demands and the conduct of the dissenters have generally been ever since their separation was formed, about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and as they continued, and are at present *,

* The puritans in Queen Elizabeth's time, after speaking of the offices of lord bishop, suffragan, dean, archdeacons, says, "all which offices, as they are strange and unheard of in "Christ's Church, nay plainly in God's Word forbidden; so

Now though, at first, they insisted chiefly on some alterations in the ministring habits and the public liturgy, yet they soon afterwards carried their demands to a much higher pitch: they charged the whole frame of the episcopal hierarchy, as being corrupted and unlawful to be continued. Bourn, p. 31, says, "It is a tremendous insult on the authority of "the Son of God, our Lord and Judge, so directly to "counteract his orders, by subjecting some ministers "to the will of others;" he means by the oath of canonical obedience, p. 34. 40. Mr. Pierce's Vindication, p. 119, says, "that the puritans looked upon "maintaining such a corrupt Church government to "be a grievous sin, and highly offensive to God; and "insisted on its being abolished †." They contested

are they utterly, with all speed, out of the same to be removed." Bishop Maddox's Vindication, p. 112.

The puritans would not tolerate others, ibid. p. 120, 121, 122. 124. The independents in the Savoy conference, 1661, do not allow that ordination to the work of ministry, though it be by persons rightly ordained, does not convey any office-power without a previous election of the Church. Neal's Purit. vol. iv. p. 191.

"But is not the Christian world in a sad condition if a bishop "cannot be chosen without a royal mandate?" &c. Neal's Purit. vol. iv. p. 37. See what he says on the absurdity of uninterrupted succession.

The author of the Foundations of Religious Liberty, in 1755, p. 24, 25, seems to declare against all civil establishments in religion, and, particularly, the establishment of the Church of England, p. 29.

† Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 548. "The people were not "to be won to the love of prelacy." The dissenters, says Calamy, Life of Baxter, p. 163, 164, charge eight things as flatly sinful in the English liturgy.

several parts of the royal supremacy *; especially the nomination of bishops and pastors. These last they declared belonged of right indefeasible † to the choice of the several congregations to whom they were to minister ‡: they were for restoring abbey lands §: they refused to use the established liturgy, and insisted that they ought to have the liberty of free extempore praying in public, as they should see occasion. And have not these same notions and demands been ever since insisted upon by the generality, at least by great numbers, of the dissenters? Are they not so to this day ‖? And can it, therefore, be probable that they will be satisfied so as to come over to our Church, unless they be gratified as to these points? Of this every intelligent person, who knows the world, must judge for himself. In particular, how little disposed they would be to bear episcopacy, such as it is here, we may see by the vehement opposition they make to a lower state of it in the American colonies, and their connexions with the presbyterians in Scotland.

The next question then is, whether these great points, as well as the smaller before mentioned, ought to be given up, in order to bring over the dissenters? Perhaps some persons in this age may think that the liturgy, episcopal government, the

* See Maddox, p. 220. 223. 324. and The late Dissent fully justified.

† Bourn, p. 86. ‡ See Maddox's Vindic. p. 218, &c.

§ Maddox, p. 233—242.

‖ See Bourn, both his pieces, and the dissenting gentleman's Answer to Mr. White.

royal supremacy, &c. might well enough be parted with for the sake of peace. But they who know the dispositions of the generality of the nation will not imagine, that this will be the common way of thinking; it would probably be entertained by very few: to be sure it would not be the judgment of those, who for their numbers, learning, and even for quality are very considerable, and regard episcopal government as of apostolical institution, and intended, by the inspired authors of it, to be, as far as conveniently might be, perpetual in the Church. It is probable, they would sooner make a schism of greater numbers than the present, and more dangerous to the state, than comply with such measures; and even the more moderate kind of Churchmen would be against these concessions, as being first likely to occasion incurable disburbances in our Church, and the rise of innumerable sects, and also to give very great advantages to popery against us, when we should be an unconnected, disunited heap of various little societies, in opposition to her so well united, and of so much, and so increasing power, in Europe. And, even on a civil account, these moderate men would be against these large concessions, because they know such concessions would too much weaken the crown, by ruining its supremacy in ecclesiasticals (which is of exceedingly great moment towards supporting the royal authority) and hurt the nobility and gentry by taking away their patronage, and they would at the same time increase and heighten a democratical spirit *; all which would tend to raise

* See Maddox vindicated, p. 210, &c.

a disaffection among the generality of the people, that would be highly dangerous to the establishment in the present family. In short, these concessions would tend to destroy by degrees the whole ballance of the constitution; and, therefore, we must conclude, that no real friend of it would be for them.

Now, if these great concessions, which are the only ones that will be likely to satisfy and bring over any numbers of the dissenters, are not to be made; the remaining question is, whether any lesser ones are proper to be made in these times? As to which point there are probably in the Church of England persons of different opinions.

Some persons think that even these moderate concessions, whilst they would not have any good effects on considerable numbers of dissenters, would be likely to disgust and offend many of our own communion: because they will apprehend, that greater ones are designed to be made, as soon as there shall be a favourable conjuncture for them; for, indeed, upon this principle, that, "we ought not to retain "the practice of any things indifferent in them-"selves, that will cause any Christians to keep out "of our communion," it follows, that we ought to lay aside, not only the surplice, but the other habits of the bishops and clergy, their ecclesiastical courts, the time of communion, the use of organs, the peoples responses in our service, the festivals of saints, and even those of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, the Lent fast, &c. As, therefore, the dissenters will be likely to consider the things, at present to be altered, as being given up, either in

acknowledgment of the truth of their general principle, or in compliance with their importunity; they will be likely to be more stiff in keeping out, and at the same time more importunate in their demands, to be let into our communion upon their own terms. And as numbers who now are not of their party, yet observing how they gain upon the Church by degrees, will think they are likely to carry their point in the end, they will become more disposed to favour and adhere to them. The right way, therefore, in the judgment of those persons whose opinions I am representing, will be to adhere to the present constitution of our Church, which is, in all its parts, strictly lawful and defensible. This course, which will have the reputation of a rational and laudable constancy, will be at the same time out of the reach of any just censure. It will check and discourage the spirit of innovation and unsettlement, which wise men have always disliked, and which, at present, so much abounds; and will be, in the end, most likely to bring over the greatest numbers of the dissenters to us, when they find that even in these times, from which they had the greatest hopes, they will not be likely to gain any points, by mere importunity or interest, against reason.

Others in the Church of England (who are more influenced by the fear of offending any Christian brethren, though weak, and by a charitable desire of gaining them) think it would be right for the Church to go so far in her concessions to the dissenters as she reasonably and safely can, even though it may not be likely that many dissenters will, at

present, be influenced by them; because that conduct will shew a charitable and truly Christian disposition in the Church, which will undoubtedly be a just reputation to her, and may be likely both to soften the dissenters at present by this indication of her real benevolence towards them, and gain more upon them hereafter, as their prejudices wear off; or, if not, yet the Church will not have done herself any harm, since she will not have parted with any things that are really necessary, or now even serviceable to her: and she will have shewn her good and reasonable disposition before God, who will be likely to bless and prosper her the more, and men, in general, to esteem and reverence her for it.

Now, without all doubt, if this condescending course was most likely to please God, it ought to be taken; but God will, certainly, be pleased with that which is likely to have most good effects upon the whole. It cannot, justly, be conceived to be his will, that, in compliance with the groundless scruples of weak brethren, any course should be taken that will tend to produce animosities in others, or civil commotions, and all the other terrible ill effects that are likely to follow upon them. It can only be supposeable, that it will be most agreeable to him those measures should be taken which are most likely to be conducive to the quiet and welfare of the whole.

Now one cannot make a true judgment of that matter, without knowing well what the real dispositions of the generality of the people of our own Church, as well as of the dissenters, are; especially, whether, if any such concessions should be proposed, either in con-

vocation or in parliament, they would not breed great heats and differences? and whether they would not be pushed farther than they ought to go? These questions must be left to the wisdom and judgment of those who are well acquainted with the characters of the chief clergy and laity, who have parts in the legislature, and with the general dispositions of the people in this kingdom. But however this point of making concessions may be determined, it will, I conceive, be, in the first place, right inviolably to preserve and to perfect the toleration, if any thing be wanting in it: and, secondly, to treat the dissenters with all Christian charity and brotherly kindness, and amicable applications, to soften the spirits of our people towards them: but, at the same time, it will be necessary to prevent violent dissenters from being able to subvert or hurt our ecclesiastical constitution. I do not contend, that this must always be done by the sacramental Test; for, though I think this method not unlawful, yet I do acknowledge it to be attended with some ill consequences, and had rather some other method could be found for that purpose: but it ought to be fully equivalent to this Test, to keep out the violent dissenters from posts of power and profit: for if this Test were to be taken away, and such dissenters were to work themselves into many posts of power, influence, and profit, as they soon would do, by being chosen to represent corporate towns, they would, in that case, be as able, as they would certainly be willing, to undermine and subvert, or, at least, much hurt, the constitution of the Church of England and estab-

lishment, and by consequence the national welfare: and though, perhaps, they might not succeed for a time, yet there would, at last, be great animosities, discords, and perhaps disturbances and commotions, occasioned by the contentions of these opposite parties, for and against the Church.

These ill effects can only be prevented (mankind being disposed as they are and will be) by keeping the violent dissenters out of civil places, and thereby hindering the increase of their power and influence, and their hopes of ever attacking the ecclesiastical constitution with success; which constitution, whatever some may think, could not be destroyed without the utmost danger of destruction to the civil establishment also.

This exclusive method, therefore, ought, in prudence and due regard to the public peace and welfare, to be taken: and if it be truly for the public welfare, it must certainly be just, as well as expedient; for the civil capacities and rights, and emoluments of all members of a society or a nation, ought to be submitted to, and limited by the consideration of the public welfare.

EXTRACT

FROM

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE.

INSTEAD of quarreling with establishments, as some do, who have made a philosophy and a religion of their hostility to such institutions, we cleave closely to them. We are resolved to keep an established church, an established monarchy, an established aristocracy, and an established democracy, each in the degree it exists, and in no greater. I shall shew you presently how much of each of these we possess.

It has been the misfortune, not, as these gentlemen think it, the glory of this age, that every thing is to be discussed, as if the constitution of our country were to be always a subject rather of altercation than enjoyment. For this reason, as well as for the satisfaction of those among you, if any such you have among you, who may wish to profit of examples, I venture to trouble you with a few thoughts upon each of these establishments. I do not think they were

unwise in ancient Rome, who, when they wished to new model their laws, sent commissioners to examine the best constituted republicks within their reach.

First, I beg leave to speak of our church establishment, which is the first of our prejudices, not a prejudice destitute of reason, but involving in it profound and extensive wisdom. I speak of it first. It is first, and last, and midst in our minds. For, taking ground on that religious system, of which we are now in possession, we continue to act on the early received, and uniformly continued sense of mankind. That sense, not only, like a wise architect, hath built up the august fabrick of states, but, like a provident proprietor, to preserve the structure from prophanation and ruin, as a sacred temple, purged from all the impurities of fraud and violence and injustice and tyranny, hath solemnly and for ever consecrated the commonwealth, and all that officiate in it. This consecration is made, that all who administer in the government of men, in which they stand in the person of God himself, should have high and worthy notions of their function and destination; that their hope should be full of immortality; that they should not look to the paltry pelf of the moment, nor to the temporary and transient praise of the vulgar, but to a solid permanent existence, in the permanent part of their nature and to a permanent fame and glory, in the example, they leave as a rich inheritance to the world.

Such sublime principles ought to be infused into persons of exalted situations; and religious establish-

ments provided, that may continually revive and enforce them. Every sort of moral, every sort of civil, every sort of politick institution, aiding the rational and natural ties that connect the human understanding and affections to the divine, are not more than necessary, in order to build up that wonderful structure, man; whose prerogative it is, to be in a great degree a creature of his own making; and who, when made as he ought to be made, is destined to hold no trivial place in the creation. But whenever man is put over men, as the better nature ought ever to preside, in that case more particularly, he should, as nearly as possible, be approximated to his perfection.

The consecration of the state, by a state religious establishment, is necessary also to operate with a wholesome awe upon free citizens; because, in order to secure their freedom, they must enjoy some determinate portion of power. To them therefore a religion, connected with the state, and with their duty towards it, becomes even more necessary than, in such societies, where the people, by the terms of their subjection, are confined to private sentiments and the management of their own family concerns. All persons, possessing any portion of power, ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust; and that they are to account for their conduct, in that trust, to the one great Master, author and founder of society.

This principle ought even to be more strongly impressed upon the minds of those who compose the collective sovereignty, than upon those of single

princes. Without instruments, these princes can do nothing. Whoever uses instruments, in finding helps, finds also impediments. Their power is therefore by no means complete; nor are they safe in extreme abuse. Such persons, however elevated by flattery, arrogance and self-opinion, must be sensible that, whether covered or not by positive law, in some way or other, they are accountable, even here, for the abuse of their trust. If they are not cut off, by a rebellion of their people, they may be strangled, by the very janissaries, kept for their security against all other rebellion. Thus we have seen the king of France sold, by his soldiers, for an increase of pay. But where popular authority is absolute and unrestrained, the people have an infinitely greater, because a far better founded confidence in their own power. They are themselves, in a great measure, their own instruments. They are nearer to their objects. Besides, they are less under responsibility to one of the greatest controlling powers on earth, the sense of fame and estimation. The share of infamy that is likely to fall to the lot of each individual, in publick acts, is small indeed; the operation of opinion being in the inverse ratio to the number of those who abuse power. Their own approbation of their own acts has to them the appearance of a publick judgment in their favour. A perfect democracy is therefore the most shameless thing in the world. As it is the most shameless, it is also the most fearless. No man apprehends, in his person, he can be made subject to punishment. Certainly the people at large never ought: for, as all

punishments are, for example, towards the conservation of the people at large, the people at large can never become the subject of punishment by any human hand. It is therefore of infinite importance that they should not be suffered to imagine that their will, any more than that of kings, is the standard of right and wrong. They ought to be persuaded that they are full as little entitled, and far less qualified, with safety to themselves, to use any arbitrary power whatsoever; that therefore they are not, under a false shew of liberty, but, in truth, to exercise an unnatural inverted domination, tyrannically to exact, from those who officiate in the state, not an entire devotion to their interest, which is their right, but an abject submission to their occasional will; extinguishing thereby, in all those who serve them, all moral principle, all sense of dignity, all use of judgment, and all consistency of character; whilst, by the very same process, they give themselves up a proper, a suitable, but a most contemptible prey, to the servile ambition of popular sycophants or courtly flatterers.

When the people have emptied themselves of all the lust of selfish will, which, without religion, it is utterly impossible they ever should, when they are conscious that they exercise, and exercise perhaps in a higher link of the order of delegation, the power, which, to be legitimate, must be according to that eternal immutable law, in which will and reason are the same, they will be more careful how they place power in base and incapable hands. In their nomination to office, they will not appoint to the exercise

of authority, as to a pitiful job, but as to a holy function; not according to their sordid selfish interest, nor to their wanton caprice, nor to their arbitrary will; but they will confer that power, which any man may well tremble to give or to receive, on those only, in whom they may discern that predominant proportion of active virtue and wisdom, taken together and fitted to the charge, such, as in the great and inevitable mixed mass of human imperfections and infirmities, is to be found.

When they are habitually convinced that no evil can be acceptable, either in the act or the permission, to him whose essence is good, they will be better able to extirpate, out of the minds of all magistrates, civil, ecclesiastical, or military, any thing that bears the least resemblance to a proud and lawless domination.

But one of the first and most leading principles, on which the commonwealth and the laws are consecrated, is lest the temporary possessors and life renters in it, unmindful of what they have received from their ancestors, or of what is due to their posterity, should act as if they were the entire masters; that they should not think it amongst their rights to cut off the entail, or commit waste on the inheritance, by destroying, at their pleasure, the whole original fabrick of their society; hazarding to leave, to those who come after them, a ruin instead of an habitation —and teaching these successors as little to respect their contrivances, as they had themselves respected the institutions of their forefathers. By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often, and as

much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a summer.

And first of all, the science of jurisprudence, the pride of the human intellect, which, with all its defects, redundancies and errors, is the collected reason of ages, combining the principles of original justice with the infinite variety of human concerns, as a heap of old exploded errors, would be no longer studied. Personal self-sufficiency and arrogance, the certain attendants upon all those who have never experienced a wisdom greater than their own, would usurp the tribunal. Of course, no certain laws, establishing invariable grounds of hope and fear, would keep the actions of men in a certain course, or direct them to a certain end. Nothing stable in the modes of holding property, or exercising function, could form a solid ground, on which any parent could speculate in the education of his offspring, or in a choice for their future establishment in the world. No principles would be early worked into the habits. As soon as the most able instructor had completed his laborious course of institution, instead of sending forth his pupil, accomplished in a virtuous discipline, fitted to procure him attention and respect, in his place in society, he would find every thing altered; and that he had turned out a poor creature to the contempt and derision of the world, ignorant of the true grounds of estimation. Who would insure a tender and delicate sense of honour to beat almost

with the first pulses of the heart, when no man could know what would be the test of honour in a nation, continually varying the standard of its coin? No part of life would retain its acquisitions. Barbarism, with regard to science and literature, unskilfulness, with regard to arts and manufactures, would infallibly succeed to the want of a steady education and settled principle; and thus the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and, at length, dispersed to all the winds of heaven.

To avoid therefore the evils of inconstancy and versatility, ten thousand times worse than those of obstinacy and the blindest prejudice, we have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution; that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion; that he should approach, to the faults of the state, as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look, with horror, on those children of their country who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that, by their poisonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution and renovate their father's life.

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure—but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership

agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, callico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership, not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract, of each particular state, is but a clause in the great primæval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact, sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place. This law is not subject to the will of those, who, by an obligation above them, and infinitely superior, are bound to submit their will to that law. The municipal corporations of that universal kingdom are not morally at liberty at their pleasure, and, on their speculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to separate and tear asunder the bands of their subordinate community, and to dissolve it into an unsocial, uncivil, unconnected chaos of elementary principles. It is the first and supreme necessity only, a necessity that is not chosen, but chooses, a necessity, paramount to deliberation, that admits no dis-

cussion, and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy. This necessity is no exception to the rule; because this necessity itself is a part too of that moral and physical disposition of things to which man must be obedient by consent of force; but if that, which is only submission to necessity, should be made the object of choice, the law is broken, nature is disobeyed, and the rebellious are outlawed, cast forth, and exiled, from this world of reason, and order, and peace, and virtue, and fruitful penitence, into the antagonist world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow.

These are, were, and I think long will be, the sentiments of not the least learned and reflecting part of this kingdom. They who are included in this description, form their opinions on such grounds as such persons ought to form them. The less inquiring receive them from an authority, which those, whom Providence dooms to live on trust, need not be ashamed to rely on. These two sorts of men move in the same direction, though in a different place. They both move with the order of the universe. They all know or feel this great ancient truth: "Quod illi principi et præpotenti Deo qui "omnem hunc mundum regit, nihil eorum quæ qui-"dem fiant in terris acceptius quam concilia et "cætus hominum jure sociati quæ civitates appel-"lantur." They take this tenet of the head and heart, not from the great name which it immediately bears, nor from the greater from whence it is derived; but from that which alone can give true weight and sanction to any learned opinion, the common

nature and common relation of men. Persuaded that all things ought to be done with reference, and referring all to the point of reference to which all should be directed, they think themselves bound, not only as individuals in the sanctuary of the heart, or as congregated in that personal capacity, to renew the memory of their high origin and cast; but also, in their corporate character, to perform their national homage to the institutor, and author and protector of civil society; without which civil society man could not, by any possibility, arrive at the perfection of which his nature is capable, nor even make a remote and faint approach to it. They conceive that He, who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed also the necessary means of its perfection—He willed therefore the state—He willed its connection with the source and original archetype of all perfection. They who are convinced of this his will, which is the law of laws and the sovereign of sovereigns, cannot think it reprehensible that this our corporate fealty and homage, that this our recognition of a signiory paramount, I had almost said this oblation of the state itself, as a worthy offering on the high altar of universal praise, should be performed as all publick solemn acts are performed, in buildings, in musick, in decoration, in speech, in the dignity of persons, according to the customs of mankind, taught by their nature; that is, with modest splendor, with unassuming state, with mild majesty and sober pomp. For those purposes, they think, some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed as it can be, in fomenting the luxury of

individuals. It is the publick ornament. It is the publick consolation. It nourishes the publick hope. The poorest man finds his own importance and dignity in it, whilst the wealth and pride of individuals, at every moment, makes the man of humble rank and fortune sensible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue, that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and sanctified.

I do not aim at singularity. I give opinions, which have been accepted amongst us, from very early times to this moment, with a continued and general approbation, and which indeed are so worked into my mind, that I am unable to distinguish what I have learned from others, from the results of my own meditation.

It is on some such principles that the majority of the people of England, far from thinking a religious national establishment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. In France you are wholly mistaken if you do not believe us, above all other things, attached to it, and beyond all other nations; and when this people has acted unwisely and unjustifiably in its favour, as in some instances they have done most certainly, in their very errors you will at least discover their zeal.

This principle runs through the whole system of their polity. They do not consider their church esta-

blishment as convenient, but as essential to their state; not as a thing heterogeneous and separable; something added for accommodation; what they may either keep up or lay aside, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union. Church and State are ideas inseparable in their minds, and scarcely is the one ever mentioned without mentioning the other.

Our education is so formed as to confirm and fix this impression. Our education is, in a manner, wholly in the hands of ecclesiasticks, and in all stages from infancy to manhood. Even when our youth, leaving schools and universities, enter that most important period of life, which begins to link experience and study together, and when, with that view, they visit other countries, instead of old domesticks, whom we have seen as governors to principal men from other parts, three-fourths of those who go abroad, with our young nobility and gentlemen, are ecclesiasticks; not as austere masters, nor as mere followers; but as friends and companions of a graver character, and, not seldom, persons as well born as themselves. With them, as relations, they most commonly keep up a close connection through life. By this connection we conceive that we attach our gentlemen to the church; and we liberalize the church by an intercourse with the leading characters of the country.

So tenacious are we of the old ecclesiastical modes and fashions of institution, that very little alteration

has been made in them since the fourteenth or fifteenth century; adhering in this particular, as in all things else, to our old settled maxim, never entirely, nor at once, to depart from antiquity. We found these old institutions, on the whole, favourable to morality and discipline; and we thought they were susceptible of amendment, without altering the ground. We thought that they were capable of receiving and meliorating, and above all of preserving, the accessions of science and literature, as the order of Providence should successively produce them. And, after all, with this gothick and monkish education, for such it is in the groundwork, we may put in our claim to as ample and as early a share in all the improvements in science, in arts, and in literature, which have illuminated and adorned the modern world, as any other nation in Europe; we think one main cause of this improvement was our not despising the patrimony of knowledge which was left us by our forefathers.

It is from our attachment to a church establishment, that the English nation did not think it wise to entrust that great fundamental interest of the whole, to what they trust no part of their civil or military publick service, that is, to the unsteady and precarious contribution of individuals. They go further. They certainly never have suffered and never will suffer the fixed estate of the Church to be controverted into a pension, to depend on the treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps to be extinguished by fiscal difficulties; which difficulties may sometimes be pretended for political purposes, and

are in fact often brought on by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. The people of England think that they have constitutional motives, as well as religious, against any project of turning their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners of state. They tremble for their liberty, from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown; they tremble for the publick tranquillity, from the disorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend upon any other than the crown. They therefore made their church, like their king and their nobility, independent.

From the united considerations of religion and constitutional policy, from their opinion of a duty to make a sure provision for the consolation of the feeble and the instruction of the ignorant, they have incorporated and identified the estate of the church, with the mass of *private property*, of which the state is not the proprietor, either for use or dominion, but the guardian only and the regulator. They have ordained that the provision of this establishment might be as stable as the earth on which it stands, and should not fluctuate with the Euripus of funds and actions.

The men of England, the men, I mean, of light and leading in England, whose wisdom, if they have any, is open and direct, would be ashamed, as of a silly deceitful trick, to profess any religion in name, which, by their proceedings, they appear to contemn. If, by their conduct, the only language that rarely lies, they seemed to regard the great ruling principle of the moral and the natural world, as a mere inven-

tion to keep the vulgar in obedience, they apprehend that, by such a conduct, they would defeat the politick purpose they have in view. They would find it difficult to make others believe in a system, to which they manifestly gave no credit themselves. The christian statesmen of this land would indeed first provide for the *multitude*, because it is the *multitude;* and is therefore, as such, the first object in the ecclesiastical institution and in all institutions. They have been taught, that the circumstance of the Gospel's being preached to the poor, was one of the great tests of its true mission. They think, therefore, that those do not believe it, who do not take care it should be preached to the poor. But as they know that charity is not confined to any one description, but ought to apply itself to all men who have wants, they are not deprived of a due and anxious sensation of pity to the distresses of the miserable great. They are not repelled, through a fastidious delicacy, at the stench of their arrogance and presumption, from a medicinal attention to their mental blotches and runing sores. They are sensible, that religious instruction is of more consequence to them than to any others, from the greatness of the temptation to which they are exposed; from the important consequences that attend their faults; from the contagion of their ill example; from the necessity of bowing down, the stubborn neck of their pride and ambition, to the yoke of moderation and virtue; from a consideration of the fat stupidity and gross ignorance concerning what imports men most to know, which prevails at courts and at the head of armies and in senates, as much as at the loom and in the field.

The English people are satisfied, that, to the great, the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They too are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestick sorrow. In these, they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm, under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which, being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these, our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; something to relieve, in the killing languor and over-laboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite to existence, in the palled satiety which attends on all pleasures which may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated and therefore, fruition defeated, by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight; and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment.

The people of England know how little influence the teachers of religion are likely to have, with the wealthy and powerful of long standing, and how much less with the newly fortunate, if they appear in a manner, no way assorted to those with whom they must associate, and over whom they must even exercise, in some cases, something like an authority. What must they think of that body of teachers, if

they see it in no part above the establishment of their domestick servants? If the poverty were voluntary, there might be some difference. Strong instances of self-denial operate powerfully on our minds; and a man who has no wants, has obtained great freedom and firmness, and even dignity. But, as the mass of any description of men are but men, and their poverty cannot be voluntary, that disrespect which attends upon all lay property, will not depart from the ecclesiastical. Our provident constitution has therefore taken care that those, who are to instruct presumptuous ignorance, those, who are to be censors over insolent vice, should neither incur their contempt, nor live upon their alms; nor will it tempt the rich to a neglect of the true medicine of their minds. For these reasons, whilst we provide first for the poor, and with a parental solicitude, we have not relegated religion, like something we were ashamed to shew, to obscure municipalities or rustick villages. No! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments. We will have her mixed throughout the whole mass of life, and blended with all the classes of society. The people of England will shew to the haughty potentates of the world, and to their talking sophisters, that a free, a generous, an informed nation, honours the high magistrates of its Church; that it will not suffer the insolence of wealth and titles, or any other species of proud pretension, to look down, with scorn, upon what they look up to with reverence; nor presume to trample on that acquired personal nobility, which they intend always to be, and which often is, the fruit, not the

reward, (for what can be the reward?) of learning, piety, and virtue. They can see, without pain or grudging, an archbishop precede a duke. They can see a bishop of Durham, or a bishop of Winchester, in possession of ten thousand pounds a year; and cannot conceive why it is in worse hands than estates to the like amount in the hands of this earl, or that squire; although it may be true, that so many dogs and horses are not kept by the former, and fed with the victuals which ought to nourish the children of the people. It is true, the whole church revenue is not always employed, and to every shilling, in charity; nor perhaps ought it; but something is generally so employed. It is better to cherish virtue and humanity, by leaving much to free will, even with some loss to the object, than to attempt to make men mere machines and instruments of a political benevolence. The world, on the whole, will gain by a liberty, without which virtue cannot exist.

When once the commonwealth has established the estates of the Church as property, it can, consistently, hear nothing of the more or the less. Too much and too little are treason against property. What evil can arise from the quantity in any hand, whilst the supreme authority has the full, sovereign superintendance over this, as over any property, to prevent every species of abuse; and, whenever it notably deviates, to give to it a direction agreeable to the purposes of its institution.

In England most of us conceive that it is envy and malignity towards those, who are often the beginners of their own fortune, and not a love of the

self-denial and mortification of the ancient Church, that makes some look askance at the distinctions, and honours, and revenues, which, taken from no person, are set apart for virtue. The ears of the people of England are distinguishing. They hear these men speak broad. Their tongue betrays them. Their language is in the *patois* of fraud; in the cant and gibberish of hypocrisy. The people of England must think so, when these praters affect to carry back the clergy to that primitive evangelick poverty, which, in the spirit, ought always to exist in them, (and in us too, however we may like it) but, in the thing, must be varied, when the relation of that body, to the state, is altered; when manners, when modes of life, when indeed the whole order of human affairs has undergone a total revolution. We shall believe those reformers to be then honest enthusiasts, not, as now we think them, cheats and deceivers, when we see them throwing their own goods into common and submitting their own persons to the austere discipline of the early Church.

END OF VOL. I.

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